

# MODERN YUGOSLAV NOVELS

IVO ANDRIĆ  
BOSNIAN STORY

I V O A N D R I Ć

# BOSNIAN STORY

TRANSLATED BY KENNETH JOHNSTONE



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## PREFACE

None of the smaller countries in Europe have made a bigger impact on the 20th Century than Yugoslavia. The desire of the South Slavs for unity was one of the principal causes of the First World War. For it could not be achieved without first destroying the Austro-Hungarian empire. The shot which killed the Archduke Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, on June 28, 1914 was literally the first fired in that war. In the Second World War Yugoslavia was the scene of the largest and most successful of the Resistance Movements to Hitler. By holding down so large a number of German troops Tito and his Partisans not only ensured that Yugoslavia should be reborn — this time on federal lines — but materially assisted the victory of their allies both East and West.

Cut off from any close contact with Moscow and thrown on their own initiative the Yugoslavs developed an independence which led to friction during the war and exploded in 1948 in a complete break with Stalin and the Russian satellites. Yugoslavia thus became the first Communist government to establish its full freedom from the Kremlin, to attack its bureaucratic centralization and experiment with workers' councils.

The death of Stalin was gradually followed by better relations between Yugoslavia and other Communist countries but

without the Yugoslavs departing from their own road to Socialism. The ferment they had started continued to work outside as well as inside Europe.

Constructive political and economic action has been accompanied by creative work in many other spheres. In painting and sculpture Yugoslav achievement is impressive and is already making itself known in the outside world. So far the writing of the South Slavs has been almost unknown to the English speaking public. In no field is their virility more striking. There is a vivid characterization. Themes of interest are worked out against new backgrounds. Here there is none of the cramping hand which has limited Russian literature in recent decades. "Bosnian Story" is the first of a series of modern Yugoslav novels which Messrs. Lincolns-Prager propose to publish in English in the near future. We feel certain they will be welcome.

House of Commons  
S. W. 1.

JOHN PARKER  
British Editor  
Modern Yugoslav Novels

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Yugoslav literature has three main traditions, Serb (including Montenegrin), Croat (including Dalmatian) and Slovene. Ivo Andrić is today the chief living representative of the first, and was for many years head of the official Yugoslav association of writers. Born in 1892 at Travnik in Bosnia (the town which is the central subject and the inspiration of this book), he has led an adventurous and active life. As a schoolboy in Sarajevo, then under Austro-Hungarian government, and as a student in Zagreb, Vienna and Cracow he was a partisan of South Slav unity and independence and as such he was held in detention by the Austrian Government during the First World War. In 1918 he was one of the secretaries of the National Council at Zagreb which proclaimed the union of Croats and Serbs. He then entered the new Yugoslav diplomatic service and served in Italy, Rumania, Trieste, Switzerland, Spain and Germany. In this period of his life he gained that wide comparative knowledge of European affairs and administrations and of different national characters which has often been lacking in Yugoslav writers and which enables him, as he does in the present book, to place his secluded, semi-oriental native province against a broader background.

More and more, as his gifts matured, Andrić came to concentrate on the life of Bosnia, past and present, and it is with this that the short stories and his best-known novel "The Bridge on the Drina" are largely concerned. Even in a country like Yugoslavia, with strong and widely differing regional characteristics, Bosnia has a remarkable personality of its own. Already in the Middle Ages it was set apart from its neighbours by its devotion to a heresy denounced by the Roman and Greek Churches alike, the heresy of the Bogomil sect. When the Turkish invasion came, the feudal lords of Bosnia kept their independence and their lands by turning Moslem and it is important to remember that when this book speaks of "Moslems" and "Beks" it means not Turks (except for the few high officials sent to govern the province from Constantinople) but men of the same Slav blood as the Christian Serbs and Croats around them. The Moslems of Bosnia were for centuries among the greatest zealots of their faith, not afraid to rebuke the Sultan himself if he showed signs of compromising with infidel ways; and as late as 1939 Sarajevo was infinitely more oriental in dress and atmosphere than Istanbul or Cairo. Administratively, the Bosnian Beks were a thorn in the flesh of the Ottoman Government and the Vizier who was nominally their Governor-General was not even suffered to live in the Bosnian capital but was forced to hold his court at the provincial town of Travnik instead.

It is this fascinating and beautiful land, with its mingling of East and West, of Moslem, Catholic, Orthodox and Jew, that Andrić has made his special study. For some years before the war he had had in mind a book which, against a historical background, should express Bosnia's beauty, vitality and cruelty, and its terrible power to mould men into its own likeness. By the outbreak of war only a couple of chapters had been written. When the Germans occupied Belgrade, the author, who had been Yugoslav Ambassador in Berlin until his country broke with the Axis, found himself once again a prisoner, although not this time in a prison cell. With time heavy on his hands and enduring with his fellow countrymen the burden of the occupation, he felt above all the need to set down the whole of his thoughts on the theme he had meditated for so long. "Bosnian Story" was the work of these years, and is Andrić's greatest achievement.

The book has four main themes. The first is the purely historical and political theme of Bosnia as a battleground of intrigue between Napoleonic France and Imperial Austria, each represented by its Consul and each trying to win over to its side the Turk, who at heart is equally hostile to both. The second theme is that of the gradually disintegrating effect of the East on western Europeans who have to live there: this is worked out in a masterly fashion in various figures in the book, some of whom have already succumbed to this insidious influence, while even those who resist are marked by it. The third theme is a study of the effect upon an honest, unimaginative man of serving a dictatorship in which at first he sincerely believes but whose aims and methods he comes with growing horror to doubt. Last and central to all is the theme of Bosnia itself, the spirit of the land and its people and the problem of their rescue from the pit of ignorance, backwardness and poverty into which history has plunged them. These are the pages which perhaps linger most in the mind after the book is closed, the descriptions of life in the various communities which make up historic Bosnia — the Travnik bazaar, its shopkeepers and loungers, the Franciscan friars and their congregations, the Moslem dignitaries, Turkish and Bosnian, the gossips round a village still. If we wish to understand something of Yugoslavia's very varied past — the part perhaps least accessible to western readers or western minds — we shall find some clue to it here. We shall also find, beneath the masterly historical reconstruction, some thoughts on problems familiar in our own time — the fate of weaker states which are alternately courted and bullied by Great Powers, the effect of revolutions on successive generations and the needs and prospects of what are now called 'underdeveloped' areas.

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Yugoslav personal and place names in this book (other than those, like Bosnia and Belgrade, which have long-established English forms) have been given in their normal Yugoslav spelling. This should not present any great difficulty to the English reader, if the following differences between English and Yugoslav pronunciation are borne in mind.

In Serbo-Croat,

c = ts. Thus, Dolac = Dolats.

č = tch. Thus, Busovača = Busovatcha

ć is a softer form of č, common at the end of Yugoslav surnames. Thus, Dafnić = Dafnitch.

dj = English j.

j = y. Thus, Atijas = Atiyas.

aj = long i or igh in English. Thus, Jajce = Yightse.

š = sh. Thus, Lašva = Lashva.

ž = French j.

Turkish names or words have been given an English transliteration.

KENNETH JOHNSTONE

## PROLOGUE

At one end of the bazaar at Travnik, under the cool, loud-flowing spring of Šumeć, there has stood, ever since anyone can remember, the little café known as "Lutva's". Not even the oldest inhabitants remember Lutva, the original proprietor of the café—for at least a hundred years he has been in one of the scattered graveyards of the town—but everyone goes to "Lutva's" for coffee and his name is remembered and spoken where the names of so many Sultans, Viziers and Begs have been forgotten. In the garden of this café, close under its walls and at the foot of a bank, there is a spot, secluded, shady and a little raised, where an old lime-tree grows. Round about this lime-tree, between the café wall and the lawn, there are fixed low benches of irregular shape, on which it is a pleasure to sit and from which it is difficult to rise. They are worn and warped with the years and with long use, until they have grown to be completely at one with the wood, earth and stone around them.

During the summer months, that is to say from the beginning of May to the end of October, this is the place where, according to a long-standing tradition, the notables of Travnik, and the more respectable sort of people who are admitted to their company, foregather in the afternoon about the time of afternoon prayer. At this time of day no other of the townsmen

would presume to sit and drink coffee on this eminence. The place is known as "The Sofa", and in the popular speech of Travnik the word has acquired, through generations, a definite social and political significance of its own since what is said, discussed and concluded on the Sofa may be taken to be as good as decided already by the counsellors of the Vizier's Divan.

On this particular day there are ten notables sitting there, although the weather is already cloudy and a wind can be felt which at that season of the year betokens rain. It is the last Friday in the month of October, 1806. The Begs are conversing quietly, seated each in his place; most of them are following reflectively the interplay of sun and cloud and coughing testily.

The talk turns on a tremendous piece of news.

One of them, a certain Suleiman-beg Ajvaz, who recently travelled on business to Livno, spoke there with a man from Split — quite a serious person, it seems — and heard from him this piece of news which he is now relating to the others. They are far from clear about it and are pressing him for details and asking him to repeat what he has already said. Suleiman-beg explains:

"Well, it was like this. The fellow asked me straight out: 'Are you getting ready for visitors at Travnik?' 'No, indeed,' I told him, 'we've no use for visitors.' 'Ah well,' says he, 'be that as it may, you'd better make ready. You've a French Consul coming. Bonaparte has asked the Porte at Stamboul to be allowed to send his Consul to open a consulate at Travnik and settle there. It's already been approved, so you can look forward to having a consul this winter.' I laughed it off as a joke. 'We've lived for centuries without consuls, and we'll still manage somehow. Besides, what would a consul do in Travnik?' But he stuck to it. 'However you lived in the past, you'll now have to get used to living with consuls. That's how it is these days. And the Consul will find his own work; he'll sit beside the Vizier, ordering this and re-arranging that and seeing how you Begs and Agas behave yourselves and how the Christians are treated and reporting everything to Bonaparte.' 'That never has been so and never can be,' I contradicted him, 'No one has ever yet poked his nose into our affairs nor ever will.' 'Very well then, you just wait and see,' said he, 'but a consul you're bound to have, because nobody has ever yet refused anything



Bonaparte asked and the Government at Stamboul won't either. Then, as soon as Austria sees that you've agreed to a French consul, she'll ask you to take one of hers as well, and after will come Russia . . . 'Eh, get away with you, neighbour!' I said to stop him, but the dirty Latin only smiled and pulled his moustaches: 'Cut these off, if it doesn't turn out just exactly as I'm telling you.' Well, that's what I heard, friends, and I can't get it out of my head," and Ajvaz finished his tale.

In the circumstances of the time — the French army had already been a year in Dalmatia and Serbia was in continuous revolt — a vague rumour of this kind was quite enough to unsettle and bewilder the Begs, who were already distracted with other cares of their own. They were anxious and disturbed, but it would have been impossible to guess it from their faces or from their placid puffings of smoke. One by one, slowly and tentatively they spoke, conjecturing what this might mean, how much falsehood and how much truth there might be in this news, and what steps should be taken to check it and possibly to nip the affair in the bud.

Some were of opinion that the rumour was false and exaggerated and had been invented by someone in order to disturb and frighten them. Others again said, with some bitterness in their voices, that it was just like the times and such things took place at Stamboul and in Bosnia and all over the world that nobody need be surprised and one must be ready for anything. A third set of speakers consoled themselves with the thought that this was Travnik — Travnik! — and not some God-forsaken little market town, and that the things which happened to other people must not and could not happen to them.

Each said something — just enough to express an opinion — but no one said anything definite, since all were waiting to see what the oldest among them would say; and the eldest was Hamdi-beg Teskeredjić, a thickset, ancient man, slow in all his movements, but still massive in build and of giant proportions. He had been through many wars and had known wounds and captivity, eleven sons he had had and eight daughters and a numerous posterity sprung from them. His beard and moustaches were sparse and the whole of his keen-featured, regular face was inflamed, covered with veins and with blue pockmarks

from the blast of an explosion long ago. His heavy eyelids were leaden in colour and drooped low. His speech was slow but clear.

Hamdi-beg at last, with his strangely youthful voice, cut short their conjectures, forebodings and fears.

"Come now, let's not cry out before we're hurt, as the saying is, and get everyone excited without cause. One should listen to everything and remember everything but not take everything to heart at first hearing. As for these consuls, who knows how it will be? Either they'll come or they won't. Even if they do, the river won't run backwards; it'll run just the same as it does now. We here are on our own ground; anyone else who may come will be on strange ground, and he won't stay long. Armies have invaded us but they've never been able to hold out here for long. There've been many that meant to settle here, but so far we've always seen the back of them, and so we shall of these, even supposing they come. They're not here yet; they're not even in sight. As for these requests at Stamboul, well, there's many a slip . . . Up till now there's been many a one asking and many a thing asked, but what a man asks for he doesn't necessarily get . . ."

Hamdi-beg spoke these last words angrily. Then he paused and in complete silence let out a puff of smoke before continuing:

"Well, let them come! Let's see what will happen and how many there are. No man's candle burns for ever, nor will this . . . this fellow's . . ."

Here Hamdi-beg gulped slightly and gave a cough of suppressed rage. He thus failed to pronounce the name of Bonaparte which was in everyone's thoughts and on everyone's tongue.

No one said anything further and at this point the conversation regarding the latest piece of news stopped short.

Soon clouds completely veiled the sun and a strong, cold surge of wind came sweeping in. The leaves of the poplars by the waterside rustled with a metallic sound. The cold shudder which passed over the whole Travnik valley announced that for this year an end had come to the sessions and conversations on the Sofa. One by one the Begs began to rise and with wordless salutations they dispersed to their houses.

# 1

**A**t the beginning of the year 1807 extraordinary things began to happen at Travnik, such things as had never been known before.

No one in Travnik had ever supposed that the town was made for an ordinary life or for the trivial daily round — no one, not even the humblest true-believer in the backstreets. This basic feeling, that they were in some way different from the rest of the world, created and called to something better and higher, entered into every single human soul with the cold wind from the hillside, with the running waters of Šumeć, with the sweet-flavoured corn from the sunny fields about the town, and it never left them, even in sleep or poverty or in the hour of death itself.

This was true in the first instance of the Moslems who lived in the town. But even the lesser breeds of all three religions, scattered about the steep slopes or crammed together in a separate suburb, were filled with the same feeling, each man after his own fashion and according to his station in life. This was also true of their town itself which had something in its situation and plan which was peculiar, personal and proud.

Travnik was, in point of fact, a deep and narrow gorge, which successive generations had in the course of time built over and brought under cultivation, a fortified passageway in which men had settled down to live permanently, adapting themselves to it and it to themselves as the centuries went by. On

both sides the hills divide steeply, crowding close together at a sharp bend in the valley, where there is barely room for the meagre river and the road beside it. The whole shape of the place is like a half-opened book, both pages of which are, as it were, illuminated with gardens, streets, houses, fields, graveyards and mosques.

No one has ever worked out the number of hours of sunshine of which Nature has docked this town, but undoubtedly the sun rises later here and sets earlier than in any other of the many towns and townlets of Bosnia. Even the people of Travnik do not deny this, but they add that while the sun does shine over their town, it shines as it does nowhere else.

In this narrow valley, in the bottom of which the Lašva flows and whose sides sparkle with springs, runlets and streams, a valley full of damp and draughts, there is hardly anywhere a straight road or a piece of level ground where a man can set his foot freely and without taking heed. Everywhere it is steep and uneven, tangled and intertwined, wound about and split up by private roads, fences, blind alleys, gardens and wicket gates, graveyards or places of worship.

Here, by the side of the water, that mysterious, unstable and powerful element, the generations of Travnik are born and die. Here they grow to manhood, sickly and pale, but tough and equal to anything life may bring. Here they live, with the Vizier's Residence ever before their eyes, proud, neat, fastidious and sly; here they work and thrive or sit idle and grow poor. Invariably canny and reserved, they never laugh aloud but they are not incapable of a smile; they talk little and prefer to talk scandal in whispers. And here, in waterlogged graveyards, they are buried when their time comes, each after his own faith and custom, and give place to a posterity like themselves.

Thus the generations change, transmitting one to another not only a peculiar personal heritage of body and mind, but a country and a religion; not only a hereditary sense of what is right and fitting and an ability to recognize and distinguish all the various paths, gateways and alleys of their intricate town but also an inborn aptitude for knowledge of the world and of men in general. All these qualities are the endowment of every Travnik baby as it comes into the world, but above all the quality of pride. Pride is their second nature, a living force which

never leaves them but governs them and sets upon them a visible mark by which they may be known from the rest of mankind.

Their pride has nothing in common with the simple bump-tiousness of prosperous peasants or of small country-townsmen who, when satisfied with themselves, swell visibly and are loud in self-congratulation. On the contrary, the pride of Travnik is all within; it is more like a burdensome inheritance, a painful duty towards oneself, one's family and one's town, or, strictly speaking, towards the exalted, lofty and unapproachable idea which the people of Travnik have of themselves and their city.

Still, every human emotion has its proper limits, and so has the feeling of one's own greatness. Certainly Travnik is the seat of a Vizier and its people are well-kept and well-bred, sensible and wise enough to talk with kings; but there came days when, even to them, their pride became a millstone about their neck and they could have wished to live instead, peaceful and carefree, in one of those obscure and ordinary market-towns which do not figure in the calculations of kings or in the quarrels of states and do not lie within the range of world events nor in the path of renowned and powerful men.

By now the times were such that there was no hope of anything at all agreeable and absolutely no expectation of positive good. For that reason the shrewd and self-reliant men of Travnik hoped that in fact nothing would happen and that life would go on, as far as possible, without change or surprises. What good could come of a time when kings were falling out, nations were giving each other bloody noses and whole countrysides were in flames? A new Vizier? He would be no better and no worse than the one before and his staff would be unknown men, numerous, ravenous and possessed with God knows what new forms of covetousness. ("The best Vizier we ever had", they used to say "was the one who got as far as the frontier, then went back to Stamboul and never set foot in Bosnia"). Some stranger, a distinguished traveller, perhaps? — But we know what that means. They leave a little cash and a few presents in the town but after them comes retribution or, next day at least, a police inquiry and investigation. Who were they, what were they, where did they spend the night, who did they talk to? And in disentangling and clearing yourself, you lose ten

times over any amount you may have made. Well then, a foreign spy? Or some confidential agent, of unknown authority and dubious intentions? The fact is you never can tell who is what, what he may have on him or whose outrider he may be.

In short, there's no luck to be had these days. Still, here's bread and here's one more day left to a man to eat and live through in peace in this finest of all the towns on earth, and God keep us from the public eye, from distinguished visitors and from great events.

Such, in these first years of the nineteenth century, were the inmost thoughts and wishes of the leading men of Travnik, but it goes without saying that they kept them to themselves: for in Travnik there lies between a wish or a thought and its visible or audible expression a long and devious road which is not easily traversed.

In recent times, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, there had been events and changes enough, a great many in fact and in every direction. Events came pouring in from all sides, they clashed and eddied all over Europe and the great Ottoman Empire, and penetrated even into this little pocket of earth and collected there like floodwater or the silt of streams.

Ever since the Turks had withdrawn from Hungary, relations between Moslems and Christians had grown steadily worse and more involved and, in general, more bitter. The soldiers of the great Empire, the Agas and Spahis, who had been forced to leave their rich settlements in the fertile plains of Hungary and to return to their own poor, constricted country, were full of rage and illwill against everything Christian; at the same time they increased the number of mouths to be fed, while the number of hands to labour remained as before. On the other hand, these same wars of the eighteenth century which had driven the Turks out of the neighbouring Christian lands and sent them back to Bosnia had aroused bold hopes in the subject Christians and had opened up prospects hitherto undreamt of; and this too was bound to have its effect on the attitude of the *rayah* towards his imperial overlord the Turk. Both sides — if one may talk of two sides at this stage of the struggle — both sides fought after their own manner and employed whatever tactics opportunity

and the times might offer. The Turks resorted to repression and force, the Christians to passive resistance, guile and conspiracy, or readiness to conspire. The Turks fought in defence of their right to live and their own manner of life, the Christians for their own attainment of that same right. The Christians felt that the Turks were becoming steadily more oppressive and the Turks observed with bitterness that the Christians were beginning to give themselves airs and were no longer what they used to be. Out of this conflict of such opposite interests, beliefs, aspirations and hopes, there grew a painful tension which the long Turkish wars with Venice, Austria and Russia continually heightened and concentrated. In Bosnia the atmosphere grew heavier and darker, clashes became more frequent and life more difficult; everywhere there was less order and less assurance. The opening of the nineteenth century had brought the rising in Serbia as the visible sign of a new era and with it new tactics. The tension in Bosnia grew sharper and tighter still.

As time went on, the revolt in Serbia caused increasing anxiety, dissension, damage, expense and loss throughout Turkish Bosnia, and consequently to Travnik as well, though more to the Vizier, the authorities and the other Bosnian towns than to the Moslems of Travnik itself. They were not prepared to consider any war great or important enough to warrant their contributing their wealth, let alone their persons. Of "Karageorge's rising" the Travnik Turks spoke with a rather forced contempt, just as they always found some disparaging word for the forces which the Vizier sent against Serbia and which the irresolute and squabbling local commanders assembled, slowly and in disorder, in the neighbourhood of Travnik.

Napoleon's campaigns in Europe had long been a favourite subject of conversation in the town. At first men had talked of them as of distant events which might be explained and described but which had not, and could not have, any connection with their own daily lives. The arrival of the French army in Dalmatia suddenly brought this legendary "Bonaparte" a good deal nearer to Bosnia and Travnik.

At the same time there came to Travnik a new Vizier, Husrev Mehmed Pasha, bringing with him a deep admiration for Napoleon and an interest in everything French, and that, as Travnik

found, in a far higher degree than was fitting for an Osmanli and for a high official of the Turkish Empire.

All this disquieted and annoyed the Moslems of Travnik and they began to express their feelings about Napoleon and his exploits in short, non-committal sentences or simply by a lofty and contemptuous pursing of the lips. Even so, none of this could entirely remove and protect them from this same Bonaparte and from the events which with miraculous speed radiated from him all over Europe as a circular ripple radiates from its centre, and which, like fire or the plague, overtook alike the man who ran from them and the man who sat still at home. This invisible and unknown conqueror plunged Travnik into unrest, commotion and excitement, as he did so many other cities of the world. For years to come the stern, resounding name of Bonaparte was to fill this Bosnian valley, and whether they would or no the people of Travnik were often to mouth its knotty, argular syllables; it was long to echo in their ears and hover before their eyes. The "Consular Age" had arrived.

All citizens of Travnik, without exception, like to put on an air of unruffled calm and a look of impassivity. But the rumoured arrival of a Consul — sometimes a Frenchman, sometimes an Austrian, or again a Russian, or sometimes all three at once — raised in them such hopes and anxieties, aroused such desires and expectations as could not be entirely concealed but set minds more briskly in motion and lent a greater liveliness to talk. Not that anyone knew the exact truth of these rumours, which had been circulating ever since the autumn; and certainly no one could say either which Consuls were to come or what they would do in Travnik. In the prevailing mood, a single scrap of news, a single word out of the ordinary was quite enough to excite people's imaginations, to give rise to innumerable conversations and conjectures, and still more, to innumerable doubts and fears, to secret thoughts and longings of the kind which a man keeps to himself and which are not uttered or declared.

The local Moslems, as we have seen, were filled with anxiety and referred with ill humour to the possible arrival of a Consul. Mistrustful of everything which came from foreign parts and predisposed from the first against anything new, they secretly



hoped that the whole affair might turn out to be no more than malicious gossip and morbid forebodings, that the Consuls might never come, or that if in the last resort they came, they might vanish with the bad times which had brought them.

The Christians, on the other hand, Catholics and Orthodox alike, rejoiced at the news and circulated and spread it about, from mouth to mouth, stealthily and in whispers, finding in it a ground for indefinite hopes and for some prospect of change. And change could only be for the better. At the same time, each of them looked at the situation through their own eyes and from their own, often opposed points of view.

The Catholics, who were in the majority, dreamed of an influential Austrian Consul who would bring them the aid and protection of the mighty Catholic Emperor at Vienna. The Orthodox, who were few in number and had been continuously persecuted for some years on account of the rising in Serbia, had no great expectations from an Austrian or a French Consul, but looked on the whole affair as a good omen and as a proof that the Turkish power was weakening and that good times of deliverance and disturbance were on the way. But they added immediately after, "nothing will come of it without a Russian Consul".

Even the few but lively Sephardic Jews could not, in the face of such news, entirely maintain the proverbial habit of silence which the centuries had taught them; and they were roused by the thought that there might come to Travnik a Consul of the great French Emperor, Napoleon, "who is as kind to the Jews as a kind father".

Like all rumours in our country, the rumour of the coming of foreign Consuls started suddenly, grew to fantastic proportions and then ceased overnight, only to reappear in a new form and with added force a few weeks later. In the middle of the winter, which was mild that year and of short duration, these rumours took on for the first time an appearance of fact. There arrived at Travnik from Split a Jew of the name of Pardo who, together with a Travnik merchant called Juso Atijas, began to look for a suitable house for a French Consulate. They tried everywhere, they haunted the Governor's office, they looked over the Moslem trust properties with the Commissioner. Finally they decided upon a large, rather neglected house belonging to the trust, in which the merchants from Dubrovnik always used to

lodge, and which was called, in consequence, 'the Dubrovnik Depot'. The house lay to one side of the town, above a Moslem school, in the middle of a large, steeply sloping garden intersected by a stream. As soon as an agreement had been concluded, craftsmen, carpenters and masons were found to repair the place and put it in order; and this house, which had up till now stood apart and had gaped at the world unnoticed through its empty windows, suddenly came to life and began to attract the attention of the public and the curiosity of children and loiterers. Talk sprang up from somewhere about the shield and the flag which were to be visibly and permanently displayed on the foreign Consul's building. These were things which, as a matter of fact, no one had ever yet beheld but the Moslems pronounced these two weighty and important words seldom and frowningly, the Christians often, maliciously and in whispers. At the same time, the Moslems were too shrewd and too proud to show their emotion; but in their private conversations with each other they did not hide it. They had for long been worried and distressed by the knowledge that the frontier palings of the Empire were beginning to totter and that Bosnia was becoming an unfenced territory trampled not only by the Osmanlis but by unbelievers from the outer world and where even the *rayah* was lifting up his head with an insolence never known before. And now infidel Consuls and spies were to come pouring in, diffusing freely at every step the authority and power of their respective rulers; and so, little by little, there would come an end to the good order, the "lovely quiet" of Turkish Bosnia which in any case it had long been becoming harder and harder to save and defend. It was the will of God that the prevailing order should be 'the Turk up to the river Sava and the German beyond'. But now all Christendom was working against the clear ordinance of God, shaking at the frontier fences and undermining them night and day, openly and in secret; and in these latest times this same divine decree seemed somehow to be growing steadily dimmer and vaguer. "What may not happen and who may not come now?" the elder Moslems asked each other with genuine bitterness. And indeed what the Christian communities were saying as a result of the rumoured opening of foreign Consulates showed that Moslem anxiety was not unjustified.

"There's going to be a flag", people whispered to each other and their eyes glittered with defiance as if the flag would be their own. As a matter of fact no one rightly knew what sort of a flag there was likely to be nor what might be expected to happen when it appeared, but the very thought that other colours might be unfurled but those of the green Turkish flag and that they might wave freely beside it brought a joyful sparkle into people's eyes and raised such hopes as only the oppressed can own and know. Those six bare words — "There's going to be a flag" — made many a poor wretch feel for a second his hovel grow brighter, his empty belly easier and his thin garments warmer. At the sound of those six simple, indefinite words many a peasant's heart gave a leap and his sight began to dazzle with bright colours and golden crosses and his ears were filled, as by a mighty wind, with the victorious streaming of all the standards of all the emperors and kings of Christendom. For a man can live on a single word, if only he has left in him the will to fight and by fighting to keep himself alive.

Apart from all this, there was yet another reason why many a merchant in the bazaar thought with high hopes of this change. A prospect of gain began to appear from the coming of this new and unknown but almost certainly wealthy set of people who would be bound to buy and spend. In these last years the bazaar had gone down and the market had shrunk, especially since the Serb rebellion. The accumulation of taxes and forced labour and the growing frequency of requisitions had driven the peasant away from the town, and now he sold almost nothing and bought only bare necessities and what the State bought was paid for at low prices and irregularly. Slavonia was shut off and since the coming of the French army Dalmatia had become a fitful and unreliable market. In these circumstances the bazaar at Travnik clutched even at straws and sought eagerly on every side the longed for sign of a change for the better.

At last there ensued the thing of which everybody had been talking for months. First of his kind, there arrived a French Consul-General. It was at the end of February, on the last day of the Ramadan fast. An hour before the evening prayer, at the setting of the cold February sun, the people in the lower bazaar were able to observe the Consul's arrival. The shopkeepers

had already begun to fetch in their goods and let down their shutters, when a scampering mob of inquisitive gipsy brats announced his coming.

It was not a long procession. At the head of it rode the Vizier's envoys, two of his highest staff officers, with six horsemen. They had ridden out to meet the newcomer at the river. All were well mounted and finely equipped. On either side and at the rear rode the mounted police of the Governor of Livno, who had accompanied the Consul the whole way. They made a fairly disreputable appearance, all frozen and weary, on small, shaggy ponies. In the middle of the convoy, on a stout and elderly grey, rode the French Consul-General, Monsieur Jean Daville, a tall man with a ruddy face, blue eyes and a fair moustache. Behind them, a few paces away, rode Pardo, the Jew from Split, and two stalwart Dalmatians in French service. All three were muffled up to the eyes in black cloaks and red peasant scarves and hay stuck out of their boots.

The procession, it will be clear, was not particularly brilliant nor over-long, and the winter weather still further diminished its glamour and distinction, since the cold demanded thick clothes, a crouching seat and the maintenance of a brisk trot. Thus, except for the few shivering gipsy children, the cavalcade passed on amid the general indifference of the population of Travnik. The Moslems pretended not to see it, the Christians did not dare to give it even a passing glance. And even those who saw it all, whether out of the corner of the eye or from some place of concealment, were a little disillusioned at such a drab and prosaic entry by Bonaparte's Consul, since most people imagined Consuls as high dignitaries who wore glittering uniforms covered with gold lace and orders, and who bestrode magnificent horses or rode in carriages.

## 2

The Consul's escort lodged at the inn, the Consul and Monsieur Pouqueville at the house of Joseph Baruch, the richest and foremost Jew in Travnik since the large house which was

being fitted out as the French Consulate could not be ready for another fortnight. It was thus in Joseph Baruch's small but attractive house that this unusual guest awoke, on the first day of the feast of Great Bairam. The whole ground floor of the house had been made over to him and Monsieur Pouqueville. Daville's own room was a large one on the corner: two windows looked out over the river and two, with wooden grills, on the garden which was bare and frozen, with a covering of frost which never melted the whole day long.

On the floor above the Consul could be heard the banging, scuttling and cries of the numerous Baruch children and the shrill voice of their mother vainly endeavouring to calm them with threats and curses. From the town there came the boom of cannon, the rattle of children's popguns and the ear-splitting sound of gipsy music. Two drums thudded monotonously and against their dark bass a pipe uncoiled and interwove strange melodies with unexpected trills and pauses. It was one of those rare days in the year when Travnik emerged from its silence.

As it was not in order for the Consul to go out until he had paid his official visit to the Vizier, Daville spent the three days of Bairam in the large room, with the same streamlet and the same frozen garden constantly before his eyes, and his ears full of these unaccustomed sounds from the house and the town. The rich, abundant Jewish food, a mixture of Spanish and oriental cooking, sent up a heavy smell of oil, burnt sugar, onions and strong spices.

Daville passed the time in conversation with his fellow-countryman, Pouqueville, in giving instructions and in receiving particulars of the ceremonial attaching to his first visit. This was to take place on Friday, immediately after the third day of Bairam. From the Residency he received as a present two large candles and a couple of pounds of almonds and raisins.

The link between the Residency and the new Consul was the Vizier's physician and interpreter César d'Avenat, known to the Turks and Serbs as Davna — a name he had now borne for the whole of the latter half of his life. Actually he was by descent Piedmontese, by family Savoyard and born in France. As a young man he had been sent to the school of medicine at Montpellier, where he still called himself Cesare Davenato. It was

there that he had adopted his present name and opted for French nationality. Thereafter in some unexplained and inexplicable manner he had made his way to Constantinople, where he had entered the service of the great Capitan Pasha, Kutchuk Hussein, as surgeon and medical adviser. From the Capitan Pasha he had been taken over by Mehmed Pasha when he went as Vizier to Egypt and from Egypt the Pasha had brought him to Travnik, as doctor and interpreter, and as a factotum useful and serviceable in any emergency. He was a tall, powerful, long-legged man, with a sallow complexion and with his black hair powdered and neatly tied into a queue. There were a few but deep pockmarks on the broad, shaven face with its large, sensitive mouth and burning eyes. He was dressed carefully and in the old-fashioned French style.

Davna brought genuine goodwill to his task and took pains to be of real use to his distinguished fellow-countryman.

All this was new and strange to Daville and fully occupied his time; but it could not shut out the thoughts which hurried through his mind, instantaneous and unbidden, especially during the slow night hours, thoughts which travelled from the present to the past or tried to pierce the clouds of the future. The nights weighed heavily upon him and seemed endless. He found it hard to get used to the unaccustomed laying of the bedclothes on the floor — it made his head swim — and to the smell of wool in the newly re-stuffed mattresses. He woke often, stifled by the heat from the sultry accumulation of woollen quilts and bedclothes and burning inwardly from the rich oriental food which makes heavy eating and is still heavier to digest and assimilate. He got up in the dark and drank ice-cold water which only stabbed and chilled his stomach.

By day, when he talked with Pouqueville or Davna, he was a calm and detached person, with a definite name, rank and profession, with a clear aim before him and certain tangible tasks which he had come to this remote Turkish province to carry out just as he would have gone to any other part of the world. But at night he was not only his actual self but also the selves he had been, or ought to have been, at any time in the past. And this man who lay in the dark during the long February nights was a stranger to himself, a many-sided being who at times was utterly unfamiliar.

Sometimes, when he was woken at dawn by the drums and pipes of Bairam or by the sound of children's feet on the floor above him, Daville had to force himself into sobriety. For some while he wavered between sleeping and waking. Dreams had more in common with the reality of the life he was living now and the actual waking world was more like a dream in which a man is suddenly plunged into a strange, far country and landed in some extraordinary situation; so waking was like the continuation of the night's dreams, from which one passed slowly and with an effort to the unnatural waking state of a Consul in the distant Turkish town of Travnik.

Into this medley of new and odd impressions older memories forced their way and mixed with the tasks and cares of the present. The events of his life passed swiftly and fitfully before him, taking on a new light and strange proportions.

He had behind him a full and restless career. Jean-Baptiste-Étienne Daville was nearer forty than thirty years old, tall, fair, with a firm step and a firm eye. He had been seventeen when he left his native town on the north coast of France and came to Paris, like many others before him, seeking a living and a reputation. Soon after his first tentative experiments the Revolution cast its spell on him, with millions of others, and became his private and personal destiny. His drafts of poems and two or three bold attempts at historical and social drama were left in their drawer: his humble post as a government clerk was given up. Jean Daville became a journalist. He published verses and literary articles but his main business was the Constituent Assembly, and he poured into his comprehensive reports of its proceedings all his youth and all the enthusiasm which he was capable of feeling. But beneath the millstones of the Revolution everything crumbled, changed and vanished, swiftly and without leaving a trace. It was like a dream. People passed in a moment and without intermission from one predicament to another, from honour to honour, from disgrace to death, from poverty to fame, some moving in one direction, others in its exact opposite. In these extraordinary times and in circumstances to be related Daville had been in turn a journalist, then a soldier, a volunteer, in the Spanish war, then an official of the hastily improvised Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was sent on a mission to Germany,

then to Italy, to the Cisalpine Republic and the Knights of Malta. Then he became a journalist again and literary editor of the "*Moniteur*" in Paris: and now, finally, Consul-General at Travnik, with the tasks of opening a consulate, creating and developing commercial relations with this part of Turkey, assisting the French forces of occupation in Dalmatia and following the trends among the *rayah* in Serbia and Bosnia.

Such would have been a fair description of the life of this guest in Baruch's house, if a short account of his career in a few sentences had been called for. But now, looking at it in the strange perspective of his unexpected three days' confinement Daville was often forced to remember with an effort who he was and where he came from, all that had happened in his life, for what purpose he had come to this place, and how it came about that he was here, measuring this red Bosnian rug with his steps the whole day long. So long as a man is among his own friends and in his habitual conditions of life, facts like these about his career mark for him, as for others, important phases or significant turning-points in his life. But as soon as he finds himself set apart or isolated, whether by chance or through his work or through illness, these facts begin all at once to pale and fade; with unbelievable swiftness they wither and crumble away like a lifeless mask of painted paper which has ceased to be of use; and from underneath there begins to emerge our other life, known only to ourselves, the 'true' history of our body and soul, which is never noticed, and of which no one else has any notion. It has very little connection with our successes in the world but, for our ultimate weal or woe, it is the only truth of any positive importance about us.

Lost in this savage place, through the long nights when every sound was muffled in silence Daville looked back on his life as an endless succession of bold advances and cowardly relapses, of conflicts, heroisms, happinesses, triumphs, interruptions, misfortunes, contradictions, needless sacrifices and vain concessions, known only to himself. Judging from the darkness and silence of this town, which he had never yet properly seen but where troubles and difficulties were certainly in store for him, it seemed to Daville that nowhere on earth were satisfaction and peace to be found. At times he felt that life demanded



immense efforts and each effort an immeasurable courage. From this dark place there seemed no end to any one of the demands made on him. If he were not to stand still and be struck down, a man had to delude himself, to pile on top of his unfinished tasks new tasks which would also never be finished and to seek new strength and greater courage in new enterprises and new endeavours. In this way he managed to cheat himself and as time went on sank ever deeper and more hopelessly into debt to himself and all around him.

As the day of his official reception approached, all these memories and contemplations gave way increasingly to new influences and to the practical cares and affairs of the moment. Daville pulled himself together. His broodings and recollections withdrew into the back of his mind, from which they were often to reappear, attaching themselves in strange and unexpected ways to the happenings of every day or to the peculiar experiences of his new life in Travnik.

Still, at last those three long days passed away, with their three mysterious nights; and with a presentiment which is very seldom among the delusions of those who have just come through a period of strain, Daville thought that morning: "Those may perhaps have been the best and quietest days which will fall to me in this cramped valley."

Early that day the stamping and neighing of horses were to be heard under his windows. Encased in full uniform, the Consul awaited the commander of the Vizier's Mameluke guard, who was accompanied by Davna. Everything took place as agreed and arranged beforehand. Twelve of the Vizier's Mamelukes were there, from the detachment which Mehmed Pasha had brought from Egypt as his personal bodyguard and of which he was particularly proud. Their neatly rolled turbans of finely woven silk and gold, their curved sabres hanging picturesquely down their horses' flanks, their full, cherry-coloured cloaks, attracted general attention. The horses for Daville and his staff were covered from head to tail in housings of cloth. The detachment were smart and their order perfect. Daville tried to mount his horse as naturally as possible; it was a quiet old black animal, broad in the beam. The Consul was in full-dress uniform. His dark blue cloak was flung wide apart over his shoulders to

display his gilt buttons, his silver sash and decorations. He looked well with his upright carriage and handsome, virile head.

Until they turned into the main street all went well and the Consul might really have felt content: but as soon as they reached the first Turkish houses, suspicious calls began to be heard, and the banging of courtyard doors and window shutters. Already at the first gate a girl opened one wing of a door ever so slightly and uttering incomprehensible words began to spit into the street as if casting a spell. In the same way, one after another, doors opened and shutters were raised and for a moment faces appeared, full of hate and fanatical excitement. Veiled women spat and cursed, small boys shouted abuse accompanied by obscene gestures and unmistakable threats, clapping themselves on the hinder parts or indicating how throats were slit. As the street was narrow and the upper storeys of the houses projected from either side, the procession rode between two ranks of insult and menace. At the beginning of it all the Consul, taken by surprise, slackened his pace, but Davna pushed his horse nearer and without moving or altering his expression began to entreat under his breath:

"I beg Your Excellency to ride quietly on and pay no attention to all this. They are uncivilized people, ignorant folk. They hate everything foreign and greet everyone in this way. Better not pay any attention. That's what the Vizier does. It's their barbarous way. I beg Your Excellency to ride on."

Outraged and furious, but managing nevertheless to conceal his confusion, the Consul rode on. He noticed that none of the Vizier's people did in fact pay any attention to the whole affair, but he felt the blood mounting to his head. Thoughts seethed and crossed and clashed in his brain. He considered first whether, as the representative of the great Napoleon, he ought to tolerate this or whether he should return to his house forthwith and create an uproar. He could not bring himself to make this decision, since he feared both that he might injure the reputation of France and also that his precipitation might cause a dispute which would ruin his relations with the Vizier and the Turks on his very first day. Having failed to muster the inner strength to take any decision, he felt humiliated and bitter against himself; and he was disgusted and repelled by the Levantine Davna who

rode at his back repeating incessantly: "I beg Your Excellency to ride on and pay no attention. These are just savage Bosnian ways and customs. Just keep quietly on."

In this wavering and irresolute frame of mind, Daville felt his face burning and at the same time a cold sweat trickling under his armpits. He disliked Davna's persistent whispering: it seemed to him villainous and revolting. It was an indication of what the existence of a west European must be who transfers his life to the East and links his fortunes with it permanently.

Meanwhile, from the last houses invisible female heads spat from the windows straight down upon horses and riders. Once again the Consul paused for a second; once again he moved on, yielding to Davna's entreaties and swept on by the gentle trotting of the escort. After that the houses ceased and the bazaar, with its low-built shops, began. On their little platforms Turkish shopkeepers or customers sat smoking or bargaining. It was like passing from an overheated room into one that was bitterly cold. Suddenly there were no more savage looks, no movements showing how to cut off a Christian's head, no superstitious women spitting. Instead, on both sides of the street, blank, impassive faces. Daville saw them dimly as if through an obstructing veil which fluttered before his eyes. No one broke off his work or his smoking or raised his eyes to honour with a glance such an unusual sight as this solemn procession. A few shopkeepers turned their heads away as if looking for goods on the shelves. Only Orientals can feel hatred and contempt to this extent and show them in this way.

Davna had fallen silent and withdrawn his horse once more to its place in the ranks, but Daville found this incredible dumb contempt of the bazaar no less painful or insulting than the loud hatred and curses of a little while before. At last they turned to the right and there rose before them the long, high walls and white building of the Residency, a large, well-proportioned house with rows of glazed windows. He felt a certain relief.

The agonizing journey which now lay behind them was to remain long in Daville's memory, as ineffaceable as an evil but significant dream. Hundreds of times in the next few years he was to pass along the same road in the same conditions: on every occasion when he was received by the Vizier — and there

were many, especially in times of unrest — he had to ride through the city and the bazaar, he had to hold himself upright on his horse, looking neither to right nor left, neither too high nor between his horse's ears, looking neither confused nor anxious, neither cheerful nor sour, but serious, attentive and calm, with an expression somewhat like that slightly unnatural gaze with which generals in portraits look out over the battle into a middle distance somewhere between the highroad and the horizon, from which some assured and well timed reinforcement is due to appear. For a long time to come Turkish children would spit at his horse's legs, lightly and hurriedly as if casting a spell, as they had seen their elders do. Turkish shopmen would turn their backs pretending to look for something on the shelves. Only a few Jews would greet them, having been caught where they were and being unable to avoid the encounter. Innumerable times he had to ride along this street, calm and dignified, quivering within himself at the hate and the sinister indifference flooding in from every side and at the thought of the unforeseen incident which might occur at any moment, loathing this work and this manner of life and hiding within himself by a convulsive effort both his apprehension and his disgust.

Even later, when change and the passage of years had accustomed people to the presence of foreigners and when Daville himself had got to know many of them more nearly, that first official ride was to remain in his mind like the black mark of a brand which continues to hurt and is only gradually soothed and erased by oblivion.

The procession passed with a hollow clatter over the wooden bridge and found itself facing the great gate. Suddenly and at once, with a rattle of bolts and a scurrying of servants both wings opened; and with them there unfolded the stage on which, for nearly eight years, Jean Daville was to play the varied scenes of a singularly difficult and thankless role.

This same disproportionately wide gate was to open before him many times more. It always seemed to him, at the moment of its swinging apart, like the ugly mouth of a giant, from which came rolling and stinking the smell of everything that lived, grew, was consumed or boiled away or suffered in the huge building. He knew that the town and its neighbourhood, which

had to feed the Vizier and all his people, poured into the Residency every day about seven hundred and fifty oke\* of provisions of various kinds and that all these were apportioned, stolen or consumed. He knew that besides the Vizier and his immediate suite there were eleven other high officials, thirty-two watchmen and at least as many or even more unemployed Turkish loiterers or Christian day-workers and underlings: to which might be added an indefinite number of horses, cows, dogs, cats, birds and monkeys. Above all rose the heavy, sickly smell of butter and tallow which turns the stomach of anyone unused to it. After every interview this insidious smell used to haunt the Consul for the rest of the day and the very thought of it produced in him a feeling of nausea. It seemed to him that the whole Residency was as impregnated with this smell as a church with incense and that it clung not only to people and their clothes but to all other objects and to the very walls.

Now, when this unknown gate opened before him for the first time, the detachment of Mamelukes parted and dismounted and Daville rode into the main court with the file of his attendants. This first, narrow courtyard was half-dark, since the upper storey of the house stretched along its whole length: but beyond it came a proper, uncovered courtyard, with fountains and grass and borders of flowers. By day a high, impenetrable fence shut off the Vizier's gardens.

Still unsettled by his experiences during the ride through the town, Daville was now further put out by the anxious politeness and ceremonious attention with which a whole population of minor and major officials received him at the Residency. They all swarmed and darted about him with a thronging agitation unknown in the ceremonial of the West.

The first to greet the Consul was the Defterdar: the Vizier's deputy, Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak was not in Travnik. Behind him came the Silahdar, the Chohadar, the Huznudar and the Muhurdar, and behind them shoved and elbowed a whole crowd of persons of unknown or indefinite function and calling. Some with bowed heads murmured a few incomprehensible words of welcome, others spread wide their hands, and the entire concourse moved towards the great hall in which the Divan was held. Through it all, with practised indifference, wound the tall and

\* See footnote on page 77

swarthy Davna, brushing sharply aside any who blocked the way, issuing orders and dispositions rather more incisively and loudly than necessity required. Daville, inwardly disturbed but outwardly dignified and calm, seemed to himself like one of those saints in Catholic pictures whom a swarming flight of angels is wafting on the way to Heaven; and this thick interweaving of humanity did in fact sweep him up a few broad steps which led from the courtyard to the Divan.

The Divan was a dim-lit, spacious hall on ground level. There were a few rugs on the floor, and round about there were sofas draped with cherry-coloured cloth. In the corner, by the window, were cushions for the Vizier and his guest. Hanging on the wall like a picture was the imperial 'tughra', a monogram of the Sultan's name inscribed on green paper in letters of gold. Below this were a sword, two pistols and a red mantle of honour, gifts of Selim III to his favourite Husrev Mehmed Pasha.

Above this hall, on the first floor, was a second like it, more sparsely furnished but lighter. Here the Vizier held his Divan in summer only. Two sides of this great room were composed entirely of windows some of which looked out on the gardens and the others on the river and the bazaar beyond the bridge. These were the "casements of glass" of which tales were told and songs sung and the like of which was not to be found in all Bosnia. Mehmed Pasha had procured them at his own expense from Austria and had imported a special master-craftsman, a German, to instal them. Seated on his cushion, a guest could see through these windows an open balcony and under the eaves above it a swallow's nest from which twittering could be heard and stalks of straw projected, and he could watch how cautiously yet swiftly the swallows flew in and out.

It was always pleasant to sit by these windows. There was always light there and greenery or flowers, a gentle breeze, the sound of water and the piping of birds, peace to rest in and quiet for reflection or conversation. And here it was that many hard and terrible decisions were taken or approved, but somehow, when they were discussed here, all matters seemed easier, clearer and more human than they did in the Divan on the ground floor.

These two were the only rooms in the Residency which Daville was ever to get to know during his stay in Travnik, the

two scenes in which his many agonies and satisfactions, successes and failures were set. Here, in the course of years, he was to discover not only the Turks, with their singular strength and limitless weakness, but also his own self, the measure and bounds of his own powers, and people in general, life and the world and the relations of mankind within it.

This first reception took place, as always in winter, in the Divan on the ground floor. From the musty smell it was palpable that the hall had been opened and heated for the first time that winter, in honour of the day's occasion.

As soon as the Consul crossed the threshold, a second door opened at the opposite end of the hall, and the Vizier appeared in shining attire, escorted by attendants who walked with their heads slightly bowed and their hands crossed submissively on their breasts. This was the great ceremonial entry, which Daville had secured by negotiations carried on through Davna over the last three days and which he planned to make the subject of his first report to the Minister. The Turks had wanted the Vizier to await the Consul seated on his couch, just as he awaited all other visitors; but the Consul had insisted that the Vizier should be on his feet and should stand to greet him. He appealed to the might of France and the warlike fame of his sovereign, the Turks to their traditions and to the greatness of the Ottoman Empire. At length it had been agreed that both the Consul and the Vizier should enter the hall at the same time, that they should meet in the middle and that from that point the Vizier should conduct the Consul towards the dais by the window on which two cushions would be placed in readiness so that both might seat themselves at the same moment.

This in fact was what happened. The Vizier, who was lame in his right leg (whence his popular name of The Lame Pasha) walked briskly and rapidly, as people with a limp often do for that very reason, and coming to the Consul, he invited him cordially to sit down. Between them, but a step lower, sat the interpreter Davna. He sat doubled up, with hands folded in his lap and his eyes cast down, wishing only to make himself seem humbler and more inconspicuous than he was, leaving only just so much mind and breath as might be needed for these two distinguished personages to communicate their thoughts and

desires to each other. All the rest of the throng disappeared without a sound. There remained only servants, stationed at short intervals to wait upon them. Throughout the whole conversation which lasted more than an hour, boys like voiceless shadows handed to one another and brought to the Consul and the Vizier all that ceremony required.

First came lighted pipes, then coffee, then sherbet. Then one of the boys, falling upon his knees brought some form of perfume in a shallow dish and passed it before the Vizier's beard and the Consul's moustaches, as if censuring them. Then coffee again and once more fresh pipes. All this was served during the conversation with the greatest attention and concentration, rapidly and deftly.

The Vizier was, for an oriental, unusually lively, friendly and open. Although Daville had previously been told about this characteristic of the Vizier and although he knew that it was not all to be taken at its face value, this consideration and friendliness did have a pleasant effect on him after the unexpected humiliations he had undergone in his ride through the town. The blood which had mounted to his head subsided. The Vizier's words, the perfume, the coffee and the pipes, all cheered and soothed him, although they could not altogether efface those painful impressions. The Vizier did not fail to emphasize in his conversation the wildness of the country, the boorishness and backwardness of the people. The climate was harsh, the people impossible. What could one expect from women and children, creatures whom God had not endowed with reason, in a country where even the men were uncivilized roughs? Nothing these people did or said could have any significance or importance or could influence in any way the acts of serious and enlightened persons. The dog barks but the caravan moves on, concluded the Vizier, who had obviously been informed of everything that had passed during the Consul's transit through the town and was now concerned to minimize and smooth over the affair. From these unpleasant trifles he passed at once to a fresh subject, the unparalleled greatness of Napoleon's victories and the cardinal importance of a close and well-planned co-operation between the two Empires, the Turkish and the French. These words, spoken quietly and sincerely, were grateful to Daville since they were an



indirect apology for the insults of a little while before and they lessened in his own eyes the humiliations he had endured. Being now pacified and in a better frame of mind, he looked attentively at the Vizier and recollected what he had gathered about him from Davna.

Husrev Mehmed Pasha, called the *Lame*, was a Georgian. Brought to Constantinople as a slave in his boyhood, he had served the great Kutchuk Hussein Pasha, in whose house the attention of Selim III had lighted on him even before Selim's accession to the throne. Active, brave, resourceful, eloquent, genuinely devoted to his superiors, this Georgian became, at the age of thirty-one, Vizier of Egypt. The affair, however, ended badly, as the great Mameluke rebellion threw Mehmed Pasha out of the country; even so, he did not fall into complete disgrace. After a short stay at Salonica he was appointed Vizier in Bosnia. It was a relatively light sentence and Mehmed Pasha made it still lighter by keeping up a wise pretence before the world that he did not regard it as a punishment at all. He had brought from Egypt a detachment of thirty loyal Mamelukes with whom he liked to perform military exercises on the Travnik 'plain'. Splendidly clad and in fine condition, the Mamelukes attracted people's curiosity and increased their respect for the Pasha. The Bosnian Moslems regarded them with hatred but also with alarm and secret admiration. And even more than by the Mamelukes, admiration was aroused by the Vizier's stud, which surpassed any yet seen in Bosnia for the number and quality of its horses.

The Vizier was young and looked still younger than he was. In height below the average, his whole bearing, and particularly his habit of smiling, added at least a foot to his low stature in the eyes of the beholder. He limped upon his right leg, but by the cut and skilful arrangement of his robes and by the rapidity of his movements he concealed this defect as far as was possible. When he was obliged to stand, he always managed to take up such a position that his disability did not strike the eye, and when he was obliged to move, he did so swiftly, briskly and in short spurts. This gave him a particular appearance of freshness and youth. There was nothing about him of that statuesque Ottoman dignity of which Daville had heard and read so much. The colour and fashion of his robes were simple, but it was

clear that they were carefully chosen. There are people who dress and adorn themselves in such a way that whatever they wear of itself adds brilliance and dignity to their appearance. His face was unusually ruddy, like a sailor's, with a short black beard and slightly slanted, black, bright eyes: his expression was smiling and open. He was one of those men who hide their true temper in continual smiles and their thoughts, or absence of thought, by a lively flow of talk. On whatever subject he chose to converse, he always made it appear that he knew much more about it than he was actually saying. Every amiable attention, every little service was made to seem only a prelude, a first instalment of all that might still be expected of him. However much one might have been briefed and forewarned, it was impossible to escape the impression that here before one was a man of distinction and sense who would not only promise but perform acts of kindness where and whenever he could: at the same time there was an absence of the kind of narrow calculating spirit which might suddenly assert itself and set a fixed term to his promises and a definite limit beyond which his kindness would not go.

Both the Vizier and the Consul turned their talk towards those subjects for which they knew the other had a secret weakness or which were his favourite topic of conversation. The Vizier returned continually to the exceptional greatness of Napoleon's personality and his victorious career: the Consul, who knew from Davna of the Vizier's love of the sea and seafaring, spoke of questions connected with navigation and naval warfare. It was indeed true that the Vizier had a passionate love of the sea and of a sailor's life. Besides his secret anguish at his failure in Egypt, he suffered most of all from the fact that he was parted from the sea and shut up in these cold, wild mountain regions. In his inmost depths the Vizier cherished the desire that one day he might succeed his great master Kutchuk Hussein Pasha and, as Capitan Pasha, might pursue his plans and intentions for the revival of the Turkish battle fleet.

After an hour and a half's conversation the Consul and the Vizier parted as old acquaintances, each equally confident that he could do much with the other and each content with his interlocutor and with himself.

At the departure a still greater tumult and bustle arose. Furred gowns of really considerable value were brought in, a gown of marten for the Consul and gowns of cloth or fox fur for his suite. A voice loudly uttered prayers for this imperial guest and the rest answered in chorus. Higher officials conducted Daville to the mounting-block in the middle of the inner courtyard. All walked with hands outspread as if they were bearing him along. Daville mounted. Over his cloak was thrown the Vizier's mantle of marten fur. Outside the Mamelukes were already waiting with their horses. The procession moved off by the same way as it had come.

In spite of the heavy robe which lay upon him, a shudder ran through Daville at the thought of having to ride once again between those worn shutters and half-opened gratings among the insults or contempt of the crowd. But it seemed as though his first steps in Travnik were to be accompanied by continual surprises, even, sometimes, agreeable ones. True, the Turks in the shops were gloomy and impassive, with eyes deliberately cast down, but from the houses, this time, there came neither spitting nor threats. But Daville had an uncanny feeling that from behind the wooden grills a great many hostile, inquisitive eyes were observing him, though there was neither sound nor movement. Somehow it seemed as if the Vizier's robe were shielding him from these people. Involuntarily he drew it a little closer round him, straightened himself in his saddle and so, with head held high, he rode up to the walled courtyard of Baruch's house.

When he was at last alone in his warm room, Daville sat down on the hard settee, unbuttoned his uniform and drew a deep breath. He was worn out with excitement, broken and tired. He felt empty, dull and confused, as if he had been thrown down from some great height and had fallen on this hard settee and could not yet come to himself nor understand clearly where or how he was. At last he was free, but he had no idea what to do with these periods of freedom. He thought of rest and sleep but his eye fell on the hanging robe which he had had from the Vizier a little while ago, and at once there came to him, as something painful and unexpected, the thought that he must write a report on all this to the Minister in Paris and to the

Ambassador at Constantinople. That meant that he must live through it all once again and tell the whole story in such a way as to be not too damaging to his dignity but not too far from the truth. This task now rose up before him like an impassable mountain which had nevertheless to be crossed. The Consul brushed the palm of his right hand over his eyes. Once again he took a number of deep breaths and as he breathed out he uttered half aloud the words "Dear God! dear God!". And so he remained, collapsed upon the settee: and it was sleep and repose to him.

3

Like the heroes of Eastern tales, Daville was faced with his greatest problems at the beginning of his Consulship. Everything seemed to spring upon him at once in order to frighten him and turn him from the path on which he had set out. Everything which befell him in Bosnia and everything which came to him from the Ministry, the Embassy in Constantinople and the Commander-in-Chief at Split was the opposite of what he had been told in Paris when he left.

After a few weeks Daville moved out of Baruch's house into the building which had been appointed as the Consulate. He arranged and fitted out two or three rooms as well as he could and to the best of his skill in such matters, and lived alone with his servants in the huge, empty house. At the time of his coming to Travnik he had had to leave his wife with a French family at Split. Madame Daville was expecting the birth of a third child and in these circumstances he did not dare to bring her with him to an unfamiliar Turkish town. After the child was born, his wife made a slow and painful recovery and her departure from Split had continually to be postponed.

Daville was used to family life and up to now he had never been separated from his wife. In his present conditions this separation fell particularly heavily upon him. His loneliness, the disorder in the house, anxiety for his wife and child tormented him more and more with every day that went by. Monsieur

Pouqueville had left Travnik after only a few days, continuing on his way to the East. Other things too combined to make Daville feel forgotten and abandoned. All the equipment for his work and for his uphill struggle, which he had been promised before he came to Bosnia or for which he had asked since, was either inadequate or simply did not arrive. Having no Vice-Consul and no colleague, he was obliged to do all the writing and copying and to undertake all the work of the office himself; and having no knowledge of the language and no acquaintance with the country and its conditions, he had no alternative but to take Davna into his service as interpreter to the Consulate. The Vizier generously ceded him his doctor and Davna was enthusiastic at the chance offered him of entering French service. Daville took him on with a good deal of misgiving and with some secret aversion, and decided to entrust to him only such work as the Vizier could be allowed to know about. But he soon came to see how indispensable this man was to him and how great was his practical utility. Davna at once succeeded in securing two reliable kavasses, an Albanian and a Herzegovinian, in taking over all questions of domestic service and in relieving the Consul of a multitude of small disagreeable tasks. Working daily with him, Daville was able to observe him and steadily got to know him better.

Having been in the East from early youth, Davna had acquired many of the characteristics and habits of the Levantine. The Levantine is a man with no illusions and no scruples and without a face of his own; that is to say, he has a number of masks and is forced to play many parts, now abject, now bold, sometimes retiring, sometimes enthusiastic. All these are only his indispensable weapons in the struggle for existence, which in the Levant is harder and more complicated than in any other part of the globe. A foreigner who is pitched into this harsh and unequal struggle is drowned in it and loses his true personality. He spends his life in the East but knows it only incompletely and one-sidedly, that is to say, only from the point of view of success or failure in the struggle to which he is condemned. Those foreigners who, like Davna, stay on in the East, take from the

Turks, in most cases, only the worse and lower sides of their character; they are unable to see and assimilate any of their better and higher qualities or habits.

Davna, of whom there will be further occasion to speak, was in many ways a man of this kind. In his youth he had led a dissolute life and contact with the Osmanlis had taught him no good in this respect. People of this sort, when their sensual life begins to waver and burn itself out, are left moody and bitter and a burden to themselves and others. Before power, authority and wealth his submission knew no bounds and he was humble even to abasement: with the weak, the poor, the immature he was brazen, cruel and merciless. And yet there was something which redeemed this man and raised him above all this. He had a son, a handsome, intelligent boy. Davna cared devotedly for his health and education. He did, and was ready to do, anything for him. This powerful feeling of fatherly love gradually freed him from his vices and made him better and more human; and as the boy grew up, so Davna's life grew cleaner. Every time he did anyone a good turn or forbore from doing them an ill one, he acted with the superstitious idea that "it'll all be repaid to the lad". As often happens in life, this raffish and disreputable parent lived in the desire that his son should be a man who would live uprightly and honorably. And there was nothing which he would not have done or sacrificed to realize this desire.

The motherless child had every care and every attention which a lad could receive and grew up beside his father like a young tree, tied to a sapless but sturdy stake. The boy had good looks, he had his father's gentler and finer points, he was physically and mentally sound and showed neither vicious tendencies nor signs of overstrain. In his heart Davna had one secret wish, one ultimate aim: that this child should not be, like himself, at every man's bidding in the Levant but should be taken first for schooling somewhere in France and afterwards into the French service. This was the main reason for his own zeal and his devoted service at the Consulate and the main ground for confidence in his real and lasting loyalty.

The new Consul had financial distractions and difficulties as well. Deliveries of money were slow and irregular, the expenses on his balance-sheet were such as he had not foreseen and were considerable. The credits which had been granted him arrived late, and those which he requested for new necessities were refused. Instead there came unintelligible and obscure instructions from the Accounts Department and inapplicable circular letters which to Daville, isolated and abandoned as he was, seemed purest irony. In one, for example, it was laid down that the Consul should confine himself to intercourse with other foreign Consuls and that he might attend the receptions of foreign Ambassadors and Ministers only in so far as his own Ambassador or Minister called upon him to do so. Another prescribed how Napoleon's birthday, August 15th, was to be celebrated. "Any expenses for an orchestra or for the decorations in connection with any ball which may be organized on this occasion must be borne by the Consul-General himself". On reading this instruction, Daville gave a wry smile. There rose at once before his mind's eye the musicians of Travnik, three tattered gipsies — two drummers and a third man with a pipe — who throughout Ramadan and at Bairam split the eardrums of any Europeans condemned to live there. He also remembered his first celebration of the Emperor's birthday, or rather his frantic effort to organize a celebration. He had vainly tried to impress on Davna several days beforehand that some at least of the leading Turks must be prevailed upon to come on this occasion; but even the few at the Residency who had promised to attend did not appear. The Brothers and their fellow Catholics refused politely but firmly. The Orthodox abbot Pakhomi neither accepted nor refused the invitation, but did not come. The Jews alone responded. There were fourteen of them, and some, contrary to local custom, even brought their wives.

Madame Daville had not yet arrived at Travnik, and Daville in all his glory, assisted by Davna and the kavasses, had played the part of the polite host and offered *hors d'oeuvres* and some sparkling wine which he had obtained from Split. He had made a little speech in honour of his Sovereign, in which he had paid a flattering tribute to the Turks and praised Travnik as a city of importance, since he had figured that at least two

of these Jews were in the Vizier's service and it would all reach his ears and that the whole gathering would recount in Travnik what the Consul had said. The Jewesses, who were seated on the sofa, with their hands folded in their laps, merely blinked throughout the speech and moved their heads now towards their left shoulder, now to the right. The Jews looked straight in front of them, which meant "This had to happen, but we have not said a word".

They all warmed up a little with the sparkling wine. Davna, who cared not at all for the Jews of Travnik and translated their outpourings with an ill grace, was hardly able to satisfy them all, as everybody wanted to say something to the Consul. Spanish too was among the languages spoken and the one in which the ladies at once unloosed their tongues; and Daville racked his brains to recall the hundred or so Spanish words he had learned at some time as a soldier in Spain. In a little while the younger Jews even began to sing. Unfortunately no one knew any French songs and they did not want to sing Turkish ones. Eventually Mazalta, Benzion's daughter-in-law, sang a Spanish ballad, breathing deeply from emotion and premature stoutness. Her husband's mother, a hearty, lively woman, so far unbent as to beat time by clapping her hands, while simultaneously swaying the upper part of her body and straightening her headdress, which the sparkling wine continually caused to go askew.

The innocent gaiety of this simple and good-humoured gathering was all that could be contrived in Travnik to celebrate the mightiest ruler on earth. This both touched and distressed the Consul. Daville much preferred not to remember it, and in writing at some length to the Ministry of how the first celebration of the Emperor's birthday had passed off at Travnik, he said, with some bashfulness and with a quite deliberate obscurity, that this great day had been feted "in accordance with the special circumstances and customs of this country". But now, reading the belated and inappropriate circular about balls, orchestras and decorations, he felt a fresh pang of shame and distress and felt equally disposed to laugh and to cry.

One of his constant worries was concern about the officers and soldiers travelling through Bosnia from Dalmatia to Constantinople. An agreement had been reached between the Turkish



authorities and the French Ambassador at Constantinople whereby the French Army was to second to the Turks a certain number of officers as instructors and experts, gunners and engineers. When the British fleet forced the Dardanelles and threatened Constantinople, Sultan Selim, with the help of the French Ambassador, General Sebastiani, and a handful of French officers, began to stiffen the defences of the capital. It was then that a certain number of officers and men were urgently sought from the French Government. General Marmont was ordered by Paris to dispatch them at once in small detachments through Bosnia, and Daville was instructed to ensure their transit, and procure them horses and an escort. He then had an opportunity of seeing how an agreement concluded with the authorities at Constantinople worked out in actual practice. The permits required for the transit of foreign officers did not arrive in time. The officers themselves had to wait at Travnik. The Consul pressed the matter with the Vizier and the Vizier with Constantinople. And even if the permit had come in time, that would still not have meant the end of the business, since unexpected difficulties suddenly sprang up and the officers had to break their journey further on and waste their time in the country towns of Bosnia.

The Bosnian Moslems looked with mistrust and hatred on the presence of the French Army in Dalmatia. Austrian agents had spread among them the news that General Marmont was building a broad highway through the whole length of Dalmatia, with the object of annexing Bosnia as well. The appearance of French officers in Bosnia confirmed the town in this mistaken belief; and these French officers, who had come as allies at the request of the Turkish Government, were met even at the frontier with insulting shouts from the crowd and found their reception worse and worse at every onward step they took. There were times when Daville's house at Travnik held a score or more of these officers and soldiers who could not get forward and dared not go back. In vain the Vizier called together the leading men of the place and requested them with threats not to behave in this way towards friends who had come with the knowledge and at the desire of the Sublime Porte. So far as words went, the whole matter was usually settled and smoothed over. The

Turks promised the Vizier, the Vizier the Consul and the Consul the officers that the hostile attitude of the population should cease; but when the officers moved on the following day, they met with such a reception at the first town they came to that they returned in indignation to Travnik.

In vain Daville sent in reports on the real sentiments of the local Moslems and the Vizier's powerlessness to restrain them or to command or impose anything at all. Constantinople renewed its requests and Paris its orders, and Split carried out its instructions. Once again fresh parties of officers appeared at Travnik, one after another, and waited in a state of indignation for further travelling orders. Everything went chaotically awry and everything recoiled on to the head of the Consul.

In vain the French authorities in Dalmatia printed friendly proclamations to the Turkish population. No one had any desire to read these proclamations, which were written in a choice literary Turkish, and those who did read them could not understand them. Nothing availed against the ingrained mistrust of the whole Moslem population who had no desire to read or hear or look but acted solely from their deep instinct of self-preservation and of hatred towards these foreigners and unbelievers who had advanced to their frontiers and were beginning to enter their country.

No sooner did the May revolution and the deposition of the Sultan take place at Constantinople than the orders for the introduction of officers into Turkey ceased. That is to say, all new orders ceased, but the old ones continued to be carried out blindly and mechanically. So it came about that, for a long time after, groups of two or three French officers kept suddenly appearing at Travnik, although their journey was now completely without aim or object.

But although events at Constantinople did in this way deliver the Consul from one of his troubles, they threatened him with another which was still worse. Daville had found his only succour and a true protector in the person of Husrev Mehmed Pasha. He had already, it was true, had many opportunities of appreciating the limits of the Vizier's authority and of his real influence among the Bosnian Begs. A great many promises had never seen fulfilment and many of the Vizier's orders had been left undischarged,

although the Vizier himself pretended not to notice it. At the same time, the Vizier's good will was clear and beyond doubt. Both from inner inclination and from policy he wished to be considered a friend of France and to demonstrate this friendship by his acts. Apart from this, Mehmed Pasha's happy disposition, his invincible optimism and the smiling ease with which he tackled affairs and overrode every obstacle of themselves acted like a tonic upon Daville and gave him strength to bear the many difficulties of his new life, whether trifling or serious.

But now events threatened to take from the Consul this great and only help and comfort. In May of that year a *coup d'état* took place at Constantinople. Selim III the enlightened, reforming Sultan, was deposed by his fanatical opponents and shut up in the Seraglio, and Sultan Mustapha was installed in his place. French influence at Constantinople was weakened and, what was still worse for Daville personally, the position of Husrev Mehmed Pasha was called in question, since with the fall of Selim he had lost his protector at Constantinople and as a friend of France and a partisan of reform he was detested in Bosnia.

The Vizier did not indeed abandon in the face of the world his broad sailor's smile or the oriental optimism which had no foundation anywhere but in himself: but this could not deceive anyone. The Travnik Moslems, who were all to a man opponents of Selim's reforms and enemies of Mehmed Pasha, declared that "the Vizier was beginning to dangle". At the Residency an anxious silence prevailed. Everyone seemed to be preparing unobtrusively for a move which might take place at any moment; and everyone, preoccupied with his own personal worries, was silent and looked straight in front of him. The Vizier himself was distracted and absent in conversation with Daville but continued to hide in amiability and fine words his inability to help anyone over anything.

Special couriers had arrived and the Vizier had sent his couriers to Constantinople with secret communications and presents to those friends who still remained to him. Davna had got to know the details and asserted that in fact the Vizier was fighting as much for his life as for his position under the new Sultan. Knowing what the loss of the present Vizier would mean

for himself and his work, Daville had from the very beginning sent urgent recommendations to General Marmont and to the Embassy at Constantinople that they should use all their influence with the Porte to ensure that Mehmed Pasha remained in Bosnia irrespective of the political change in the capital, since both the Russians and the Austrians were working so hard for their friends and in Turkey the influence and strength of a Christian Power were judged by their ability in this direction.

The Bosnian Moslems were jubilant. "The Infidel Sultan has been dethroned," said the hodjas in the bazaar, "and now the time is coming when all the dirt which in these last years has sullied the true Faith and the true Osmanlis will be wiped away. The Lame Vizier will go and take his friend the Consul with him, just as he brought him here." The crowd spread these words and became steadily more aggressive. The Consul's servants were insulted and attacked. Davna had jests and abuse hurled after him in the street and they asked him whether the Consul was getting ready to leave and if not, what was he waiting for. The interpreter, tall and swarthy on his chestnut mare, gave them a look of contempt and answered sharply but deliberately that they had no idea what they were saying; that they could only have heard such things from some fool who had drunk himself silly with Bosnian brandy; that the new Sultan and the French Emperor were great friends and instructions had already gone out from Constantinople that the French Consul at Travnik was an official Guest of the State, that the whole of Bosnia would be burnt if anything were to happen to him and that not even babes in the cradle would be spared. Davna repeated incessantly to the Consul that at a time like this it was essential to proceed boldly and ruthlessly since this was the only thing which made any impression on these savages who always attack those who turn their backs.

The Vizier, in his fashion, acted on the same principle. The detachment of Mamelukes went every day to exercise on the field by the Sepulchres and the people of Travnik looked on with hatred but also with alarm at these athletic horsemen as spick and span as bridegrooms in their shining, heavy armour. The Vizier rode out to the field with them, as a spectator at their exercises, and himself competed in shooting at the target.

like a man without a care in the world who had never a thought of departure, let alone death, but was preparing for a fight. Both parties, the Turks of Travnik and the Vizier, were waiting for the decision of the new Sultan and for news from Constantinople as to the outcome of the struggle in progress there.

In the middle of the summer a special envoy, one of the Sultan's Kapidji-bashas, arrived with an escort. Mehmed Pasha arranged an exceptionally brilliant reception for him. The whole detachment of the Vizier's Mamelukes, all his officers and pages, went out to meet him. Cannon were fired from the fortress. Mehmed Pasha awaited the Kapidji-basha in front of the Residency. At once a rumour spread through the town that this meant that the Vizier had succeeded in winning the favour of the new Sultan and would remain in Travnik. The Moslems were reluctant to believe it and declared that the Kapidji-basha would return to Constantinople with Mehmed Pasha's head in his horse's nosebag. Nevertheless, the rumours proved accurate. The Kapidji-basha had brought a decree confirming Mehmed Pasha in his post at Travnik and at the same time he had handed the Vizier, with great ceremony, a valuable sword, the gift of the new Sultan, together with orders to move against Serbia with a powerful army next spring.

This joyful event was clouded suddenly and unexpectedly. Some time before, Daville had fixed an appointment with the Vizier for the day after the Kapidji-basha's arrival. Mehmed Pasha not only did not cancel the reception but received the Consul in the presence of the Kapidji-basha, whom he introduced to him as an old friend and as the auspicious mouthpiece of the Sultan's favour. At the same time he showed him the sword which he had received as a present from the Sultan.

The Kapidji-basha, who assured the Consul that he too, like Mehmed Pasha, was a sincere worshipper of Napoleon, was a tall man, obviously a mulatto, of a strongly pronounced negroid type. His sallow skin had a greyish tone. His lips and nails were a dark blue and the whites of his eyes were muddy and, as it were, discoloured. The Kapidji-basha talked at length and with emotion of his sympathy with the French and his detestation of the Russians. In the deep hollows on either side of his full, blackamoor's lips, a white foam gathered as he spoke.

Looking at him, Daville wished that the man would pause for breath and wipe it off, but the Kapidji-basha went on talking, like one in a fever. Davna, who was interpreting, was scarcely able to keep up with him. With a fresh outburst of hatred the Kapidji-basha told of his previous campaigns against the Russians, and of the engagement somewhere near Otchakov in which he had been wounded; and like a flash, with unexpected swiftness, he rolled up the narrow sleeve of his tunic and showed on his forearm a long scar from a Russian sabre. His thin, powerful, dusky hand trembled visibly.

Mehmed Pasha had taken pleasure in this cordial conversation between his friends and had laughed even more than was his custom, like one who cannot conceal his satisfaction and happiness at the fact that his master's favour has lighted upon him.

That day the audience went on longer than usual. As they were returning, Daville asked Davna "How does that Kapidji-basha strike you?" He knew that in answering a question of that kind about anyone Davna always produced all the facts he had succeeded in collecting about them up to that moment. But this time Davna was unusually terse. "He's a very sick man, Monsieur le Consul-Général." "Yes, he's a queer man to have to entertain." "A very, very sick man," whispered Davna, looking straight in front of him and not engaging in further conversation.

Two days later, before the usual time, Davna asked the Consul to see him urgently. Daville received him in the dining-room where he had just finished breakfast. It was Sunday, and one of those summer mornings whose freshness and beauty are like a recompense for the cold, dark, unpleasant autumn and winter days. The air was cool and filled with murmurings and with the shining blue haze from countless invisible streams. Daville was rested and had slept well, pleased with yesterday's good news that Mehmed Pasha would be staying on at Travnik. In front of him stood the remains of his breakfast and he was wiping his lips with the gesture of a healthy man who has just satisfied his hunger, when Davna came in, sallow and pale as ever, with his lips tightly pressed together and his jaw set. In a low voice Davna informed him that the Kapidji-basha had died that night. Daville stood up, so suddenly that he upset the little

breakfast table, and Davna, standing on the same spot and altering neither his voice nor his position, replied to the Consul's agitated questions with short, indefinite phrases.

On the previous afternoon, the Kapidji-basha, who in other respects had not lately been in the best of health, had felt unwell. He had taken a hot bath and gone to bed and had died suddenly during the night, when no one had had the least presentiment of such a thing and before anyone could bring him help. He was to be buried that morning. All that Davna could find out about the death itself or about the reaction which this news was likely to provoke in the town, he would report forthwith. No more could be got from him. To Daville's question, whether there was anything to be done, any condolences to be expressed or the like, Davna replied that no action should be taken as it would be a breach of good manners. Death in these countries is ignored and everything that has to do with it is discharged briefly, with the fewest possible words and ceremonies.

Left alone, Daville felt that the day which had begun so cheerfully had suddenly darkened. He could not help thinking of the tall, rather unpleasant man with whom he had been talking only two days ago and who was now dead. He thought too of the Vizier and of the unpleasantness which the death of a high official, here in his house, must mean for him. Davna's pale, funereal face was constantly before him, his impassivity and silence and the way in which he had bowed and left, as coldly and gloomily as he had come in.

Following Davna's advice the Consul took no action but he did not cease to think about the death at the Residency. Next morning, Davna came again and this time, in the recess of a bay window, he disclosed to the horrified Consul in a whisper the true intention of the Kapidji-basha's mission and the reason of his death.

The Kapidji-basha had in fact brought the Vizier's death sentence. The Sultan's decree confirming his present position and the sword of honour were only designed to cover up this sentence, to reassure the Vizier and to mislead the public. Just before his departure from Travnik, when he had lulled the Vizier's vigilance in this way, the Kapidji-basha was to have produced the second decree, the *Katil-firman*, in which, like all who

had worked directly or indirectly with the previous Sultan, the Vizier was condemned to death, and he was to have ordered one of the officers of his suite to execute Mehmed Pasha before any of his people could rush to his aid. But the cunning Vizier, who had foreseen such a possibility, had heaped attentions and respect on the Kapidji-basha, pretending to believe all he said and to be overjoyed at the Sultan's favours, while he at once set about suborning his followers. Meanwhile he had shown him the town and had introduced him in the Divan to the French Consul. On the following day there had been a splendid outdoor banquet in a meadow by the road which leads to the Sepulchres. When they got back to the Residency after a grand entertainment, with abundance of highly-spiced food, the Kapidji-basha had been seized with a raging fever "from the chilly Bosnian water". The Vizier had offered his guest the use of his finely appointed Turkish baths. While the Kapidji-basha was steaming on the hot stone flags, sweating abundantly and waiting for the masseur whom Mehmed Pasha had particularly recommended to him, some of the Vizier's skilful servitors had removed the lining of his furred gown, in which, according to the directions of a bribed attendant, the *Katil-firman* would be found concealed. The *firman* was discovered and handed over to the Vizier. And when the Kapidji-basha, rested and steaming, emerged from the baths, he suddenly felt a hot, feverish thirst which no drink could quench. The more he drank, the stronger the poison worked. Before dark he fell down, howling like a man whose mouth and entrails are on fire, and then stiffened and was silent. When they saw that he had lost the power of speech and was completely paralyzed and that he could not express himself by word or sign, they ran in all directions from the Residency to find a doctor and call a hodja. For the doctor it was too late, but for a hodja there is always time.

Blue as indigo and stiff as a dead fish, the Kapidji-basha lay on a narrow couch in the middle of the room. Only his eyelids still fluttered and from time to time, though with difficulty, he opened and moved his eyes, rolling them with fearful glances round the room, probably looking for his gown or for one of his people. The great dark eyes of this man who had come to deceive and kill, only to be himself deceived and killed, were



the only thing about him which still lived and they expressed all he could no longer say or do. All about him the Vizier's servants moved on tiptoe, showing him every possible attention and in their awe and fear communicating with each other only by signs or brief whispers. No one was able to say exactly when he died.

The Vizier showed himself a grief-stricken host. The unexpected death of his old friend marred all his joy in the good news and in the great honour done him. His flashing, white teeth now remained hidden under his thick black moustaches. A changed man, without a smile, the Vizier spoke to all, but only briefly, in a broken voice full of controlled suffering. He summoned the governor of the town, Resim Beg, a weak and prematurely aged man of a good Travnik family, and begged him to help him at this time, although he well knew that the governor was not competent even at his own work and never got through it. And in the governor's presence he lamented bitterly:

"It was written that he should come so long a journey, only to die before my eyes. That is Fate, but I feel I would sooner have lost my own born brother," said the Vizier to Resim Beg, with the air of a man who despite all his fortitude cannot entirely keep silence about his affliction.

"Well, Pasha, what use complaining?" the governor said to console him. "It is said, you know, 'We are all dead men, but one is laid in the grave before another'."

The *Katil-firman*, which was to have caused Mehmed Pasha to be executed and put away, was carefully sewn once more into the same place in the lining of the Kapidji-basha's gown. The Kapidji-basha was to be buried that morning in one of the leading Travnik cemeteries; and the whole of his suite, well bribed and richly rewarded, were to start back that very day for Constantinople.

And with this Davna ended his report on the latest events at the Residency.

Daville was beside himself and dumb with astonishment. It all sounded like an improbable romance and at times he would have liked to interrupt the interpreter. The Vizier's conduct seemed to him not only terrible and criminal, but risky and

illogical as well. Utterly appalled, the Consul walked up and down the room, and looked into Davna's face, as if to see whether he had really spoken seriously or whether he had lost his wits.

"What's that? What's that? It's not possible! Surely that can't be true! How could he dare? It's bound to be known! And, when all's said and done, what good can it do him?"

"Oh, it will help. It looks as if it may help," said Davna calmly.

The Vizier's calculation, bold as it was, was not in fact as mistaken as at first sight it might appear, so Davna explained to the Consul, who had stopped pacing up and down. First of all, the Vizier had escaped the immediate danger, and that with great skill, outplaying his antagonists and outwitting the Kapidji-basha. People might suspect and chatter, but no one was in a position to say anything and still less to prove it. Secondly, the Kapidji-basha had publicly brought the Vizier happy news and exceptional honours. Consequently, the Vizier was the last person who should have desired his death; and those who had despatched the Kapidji-basha on his two-faced mission, would not dare, at least on this first occasion, to take any steps against the Vizier, since in doing so they would acknowledge that they had harboured evil intentions against him and that these had miscarried. Thirdly, this Kapidji-basha had been a much hated man, of ill reputation, a mulatto, with no real friends, who betrayed and lied as easily as he breathed and spoke, and for whom no one had had any use, even among those who employed him. His death, therefore, would not greatly surprise anyone, still less would it give rise to any indignation or desire for revenge. His own corrupted followers would use every effort to that end. Fourthly, and most important of all, utter confusion now prevailed at Constantinople and Mehmed Pasha's friends, to whom, only a few days before the unexpected arrival of the Kapidji-basha, he had sent "all that was necessary" would in time succeed in completing the countermining operations they had begun, they would save the Vizier's reputation with the new Sultan and, if possible, get him confirmed in his present post.

Cold with excitement, Daville listened to Davna's calm exposition, and being unable to refute him, he could only

stammer — "But . . . but . . .!" Davna did not consider that the Consul needed convincing further; he merely added that the town was quiet and that the news of the Kapidji-basha's sudden death had not provoked any special agitation, although there was plenty of comment.

As soon as he was left alone, there passed before Daville's eyes all the horror of what he had just heard, and as the day waned, his disquiet grew. He ate little and could not stay in one place. Sometimes he thought of calling Davna and asking him something, simply to convince himself that the whole of that morning's relation had actually taken place. He began to consider what kind of report he should write about it all, whether indeed he should report it. He sat down at the table and began. "In the Vizier's Residency here there was enacted last night . . ." No, that was flat and insipid. "The events of the last few days show more and more clearly that, by the use of means and methods which are customary here, Mehmed Pasha will succeed in retaining his post, even under the new dispensation and that, besides, we may count on his favouring us . . ." No, no, that was dry and not clear enough. At last he came to see that the best plan was to report and describe things exactly as they had appeared to the outside world: a special Kapidji-basha had arrived from Constantinople and had brought a *firman* confirming the Vizier in his present post and had handed him a sword as a sign of the Sultan's favour and of his forthcoming expedition to Serbia. He could emphasize at the end that this was a good omen for the further development of French efforts in this region, and he might add incidentally that the Kapidji-basha, as it happened, had died suddenly at Travnik while carrying out his mission.

This mental shaping and reshaping of his official report soothed Daville a little. The crime which had taken place only yesterday, here, under his very eyes, suddenly began to look less frightful and repulsive as soon as it had become the subject of his meditations on his report. The Consul sought vainly within himself for the horror and the moral emotion of the morning.

He sat down and wrote his report, presenting the affair just as it had appeared to the outside world. Then, having copied it fair, he felt a still greater sense of peace and even a kind of

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contentment with himself at the thought that this report was founded on great and weighty secrets which had been wisely shrouded in silence. In this frame of mind he waited for the summer twilight, full of quiet and of reflected light in the heavy shadows of the steep hillsides. The Consul stood at the open window, tranquil once more. Someone came into the room behind him with a lighted taper and began to light the candles on the table. At that moment the thought came into his mind: But who can have prepared the poison for the Vizier, adjusted the dose, and made an expert reckoning of its action, so that the whole affair proceeded at the right pace (each stage at its appointed time) and not with excessive or unnatural suddenness? Who, if not Davna? It was his trade. He had been in the Vizier's service up till now and possibly still was. The whole of Daville's apparent peace of mind left him in a flash. Once more there revived in him that morning's feeling of horror that here, immediately near him and in connection with his work, and therefore in a sense with his concurrence, a crime had been committed and his own interpreter, perhaps, had been bribed to it as a mean accomplice. This feeling enveloped him like fire. What man could be sure of his life here or protected from violence? And what was that life worth on such terms as these? — And so he stood, crushed, between the light of the candles which began to burn in the room one by one and the last, already darkening gleam on the steep slopes outside.

The evening came and led up to one of those dreary, wakeful nights with which Daville had lately become so familiar at Travnik, when one is unable to go to sleep but is quite unfit for regular thought. And even when he succeeded for a moment in falling into a kind of half-sleep, there passed before him in fitful procession, turn by turn and unbidden, Mehmed Pasha's broad and radiant smile of two days before, the thin sinewy hand of the Kapidji-basha with the broad scar and the gloomy, expressionless face of Davna as he quietly spoke the words "A very, very sick man". And in all this there was no order and no continuity. Each of these pictures lived only for itself, with no connecting cause, just as if nothing were fixed or decided and as if the crime might happen but then again might even now be prevented. Daville suffered agonies in this half-sleep, wishing

with all his heart that the crime might not take place but feeling, somewhere in the depths of his consciousness, that it had already happened. Often an oppressive, feverish night of this kind sums up a whole experience and seals it for ever like a sound-proof door of iron.

During the days that followed Davna came to the Chancery as usual. He was quite unchanged. And likewise, the sudden death of the Kapidji-basha had caused not the slightest indignation among the Moslems of the city; the voices of doubt and accusation had not indeed been silent, but they were not greatly interested in the fate of this Osmanli. They saw only one thing, that their detested Vizier was staying on at Travnik, and that he had even been rewarded. They concluded from this that nothing had been altered at Constantinople by the revolution of May. They therefore withdrew into a disillusioned silence, clenched their teeth and lowered their eyes. It was clear to them that the new Sultan, in his turn, was under the influence of infidels and of their corrupt and rascally allies and that the triumph of the good cause was once again postponed. But they continued to believe as solidly as ever that the true and pure faith would conquer and that they must wait; and no one knows how to wait as well as true Bosnian Moslems, that is to say, people of a stubborn faith and a stony pride, who can be as impetuous as a mountain stream and as patient as the earth.

Daville felt once more that same horror of the previous day and that sick, cold fear in his entrails. This was on the occasion of the first audience which he had after the Kapidji-basha's destruction. Twelve days had gone by. The Vizier had been unchanged and smiling. He had spoken of the preparations for his expedition to Serbia and had approved all Daville's plans for Franco-Turkish co-operation on the frontier between Bosnia and Dalmatia. Making a great effort to be calm and natural, Daville had, incidentally and at the end of the interview, expressed his sincere regret at the death of a high dignitary of the Empire and a friend of the Vizier. Before Davna had had time to translate these words, the Vizier had ceased to smile. The black moustaches covered the gleaming white teeth. His face with the slanting almond eyes became suddenly shorter and broader and remained so until the interpreter had finished

translating Daville's expressions of sympathy. The rest of the conversation was once more conducted with smiles.

The general oblivion and calm soothed Daville. Seeing that life went on unchanged, he said to himself: "The moral is that one can go on living, even like this." He had no further talk with Davna about the crime at the Residency. His time was filled with work. With each day that passed Daville gradually shook off that unreasonable pricking of conscience and his first feeling of indignant horror and by the laws which govern every living creature, he let the flow of everyday life bear him along. Actually, he would never again, he thought, be able to look at Mehmed Pasha without thinking within himself that this was the man who, in Davna's words, "was the quicker and cleverer and had outwitted his enemies"; but he would work with him and talk with him on every subject except that one.

About that time the Vizier's second-in-command, Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak, returned from beyond the Drina, after having completely crushed the Serb rebels — or so it was said up at the Residency. Suleiman Pasha himself used more restrained and less definite language on the subject. The Vizier's deputy was a Bosnian and came of one of the leading aristocratic families. He had large estates in Bosnian Skoplje on the Kupres and some ten houses and shops at Bugojno. Tall, tough, slim in the waist despite his advanced years, with blue eyes and a keen regard, he was a man who had seen many wars and won great possessions and had become a Pasha without court favour and without much bribery. He was stern in peace and harsh in war, greedy for land and not over-considerate in his methods of securing it, but incorruptible, sound, and lacking the Ottoman vices.

Attractive was hardly a word which could be applied to this Pasha of rustic exterior and stiff bearing, with the sharp eye of "the best shot in Bosnia". Towards foreigners he was, like the Osmanlis, slow and mistrustful, crafty and stubborn, and he was, besides, naturally brusque and rough of speech. For the rest, Suleiman Pasha spent the greater part of the year campaigning in Serbia or on his estates, and lived at Travnik only for the winter months. His presence there now signified the end of the campaign, at least for that year.



In other ways too things began to calm down and became more normal. Autumn arrived. First, the early autumn, with weddings, the vintage, livelier trade and better earnings; then the late autumn, with its rain, its coughs and its cares. The mountains became inaccessible and people less mobile and less enterprising. Everyone prepared to spend the winter where he happened to be and began to reckon how he would get through it. Even the huge mechanism of the French Empire, it seemed to Daville, worked more gently and slowly. The Congress of Erfurt was brought to a close. Napoleon moved towards Spain, which meant that for the time being the maelstrom was transferred to the west. Couriers were few, orders from Split less frequent. The Vizier, on whom Daville counted most of all, was remaining, it seemed, at his post; once again he displayed his brightest smile. (The 'countermine' laid by his friends at Constantinople appeared to have succeeded). The Austrian Consul, whose coming had long been talked of, had still not arrived. Daville had notice from Paris that before the end of the year he would be sent a career officer with a knowledge of Turkish. Davna, in difficult times, showed himself skilful, reliable and devoted.

The greatest happiness of all was in store for Daville before the autumn began. Quietly and almost unnoticed Madame Daville arrived with three children, the three sons Pierre, Jules-François, and Jean-Paul. The first was four, the second two, the third had been born a few months ago at Split.

Madame Daville was fair, slight and thin. Beneath a meagre head of hair, which was gathered up into a coiffure unrelated to any fashion, her face was small and lively, with a fresh complexion, well-cut features and blue eyes of a metallic shine. But behind an exterior which was at first sight undistinguished and insignificant, there was concealed a sensible, sober and energetic woman of strong will and tireless frame — one of those women of whom one says that they are "equal to anything". Her life was spent in fanatical, but intelligent and patient service to her home and family. To this service she devoted her thoughts and feelings and her thin hands, always red and in appearance rather feeble, never rested for a moment and drove through work as if they were made of steel. Of a good bourgeois family, which had gone bankrupt during the Revolution, she had grown up

in the house of an uncle, the Bishop of Avranches, and was a woman of sincere piety, that special French piety which is sane and human and knows neither doubt nor bigotry.

As soon as Madame Daville arrived, a new era began in the great empty building of the French Consulate. Saying little, making no complaints and seeking nobody's help or advice, she worked from early morning to any hour of the night. The house grew clean and orderly; a number of changes were introduced, so as to relieve as far as possible the needs of the new household. Rooms were reconstructed, windows and doors were walled up and new ones were opened. For lack of furniture and covers, Turkish chests and rugs and Bosnian linen were used. The house, rearranged and cleaned, looked completely different. Footsteps no longer echoed drearily through it as they had done before. The kitchen was completely re-equipped. Little by little everything took on the stamp of French life, moderate and reasonable but rich in solid satisfactions. Next year's spring would find a transformation in the house and in all within and about it.

On the level patch of ground in front two plots were contrived which with their beds of flowers and general spacing were meant as a modest imitation of a French garden. At the back a hen-house was erected, and stores and sheds were arranged. All this was done according to Madame Daville's plans and under her supervision. In this task the Consul's wife had to battle with difficulties of every kind and especially with the servant problem. It was not the kind of servant trouble of which all the housewives of this world have always had to complain, but a real emergency. At first no one was willing to take service with the Consulate. Turkish servants were unthinkable. No one from the few Orthodox houses was willing to come and the Catholic girls, who acted as servants even in Turkish houses, did not at first dare to set foot in the French Consulate, because the Brothers had threatened them with excommunications and dire penances. The wives of the Jewish merchants barely succeeded in somehow persuading a few gipsy girls to work at the new Consulate for a good wage. But when Madame Daville managed to show, by her visits and offerings to the church at Dolac that, although the wife of the "Jacobin Consul", she was a true Catholic, the Brothers abated

a little of their severity and tacitly agreed that the womenfolk might work for the Consul's wife.

In general, Madame Daville strove to establish and maintain the best possible relations with the clergy at Dolac, and with the Brothers at Guča Gora and their congregations. And despite all the difficulties, the ignorance and the mistrust he had encountered, Daville hoped that before the Austrian Consul arrived in Travnik, he would at least have succeeded, through his wife's piety and intelligence, in securing for himself some influence with the Brothers and the Catholic community.

In short, by the first days of autumn everything had become more peaceful and more pleasant, both about the house and in the office. A feeling persisted in Daville, indefinite but constant, that everything was clearing up and taking a turn for the better, or at least was beginning to look easier and more tolerable.

A pale autumn sky shone above Travnik and under it the streets with their washed paving looked bright and clean. The woods and spinneys had changed colour and their foliage had grown thinner and sparser. The river showed swift and clear in the sun, and confined in its narrow channel, vibrated like a plucked string. The roads were dry and hard, with stains from the crushed fruit which had fallen off the market loads and with wisps of hay hanging from the oak boughs and the twigs along the side of the way.

Daville went out for a long ride every day. He rode by the smooth highway through Kupilo, under the high elms and looked down into the valley beneath him at the houses with their black roofs and the blue smoke, the mosques and scattered white graveyards, and it seemed to him as if all of it, the buildings, the streets and the gardens formed a kind of picture puzzle which little by little came closer and closer to the understanding. An air of calm and relaxation spread out on every side. The Consul breathed it in with the autumn air and felt a need to turn and say as much, if only by a smile, to the kavass who was riding with him.

But in fact, it was no more than a pause for breath.

During these first few months Daville never ceased to complain in his reports of everything a Consul in such circumstances could possibly complain of. He complained of the malice and hatred of the local Moslems, of the slowness and unreliability of the authorities, of his low pay and inadequate advances, of the house (which showed signs of leaking), of the climate (which made his children ill), of the intrigues of Austrian agents, of the lack of understanding which he encountered from his superiors at Constantinople and Split. In short, everything was difficult, unsatisfactory, topsy-turvy, and everything gave cause for complaints and excuses. Among other things, Daville particularly complained that the Ministry did not send him a reliable man, a career officer, with a knowledge of Turkish. The man Davna was usable in an emergency, but the Consul was unable to trust him completely. The great keenness he had shown could still not dispel the Consul's doubts. Besides, Davna could only speak French, he could not conduct official correspondence.

For information work among the general public Daville had taken Rafa Atijas, a young Travnik Jew, who had escaped from work in his uncle's warehouse and preferred to become interpreter in the "Illyrian" language rather than superintend the tanning of leather. Daville could trust him even less than Davna. He therefore implored, in every report, that an officer be sent.

At last, just as he had already begun to lose hope and was slowly becoming used to Davna and gaining confidence in him, a new secretary and interpreter arrived, young Desfossés.

Amédée Chaumette Desfossés belonged to the youngest generation of Parisian diplomats, that is to say, to the first batch of those who after the stormy years of the Revolution had received a regular education in favourable conditions and had been given special training for service in the East. He came of a banking family which had not completely lost its old and established fortune either in the Revolution or under the rule of the Directory. At school he had been reckoned a prodigy and had amazed his teachers and comrades with the force of

his intelligence, the rapidity of his judgement and the ease with which he acquired the most diverse kinds of knowledge. He was tall, athletic in build, fresh-faced, with large brown eyes which shone with curiosity and restlessness. It struck Daville at once that he had before him a typical product of the new age, the new generation of Parisians, forward and assured in speech and movement, carefree, realistic, confident in their own strength and knowledge and inclined to overrate both.

The young man handed over the mail and gave a brief account of what it was most necessary for Daville to know, he did not hide the fact that he was tired and cold. He ate abundantly and with appetite and made it clear, without overmuch excuse, that he wanted to go to bed and rest. He slept the whole of that night and until just before noon the following day. He rose fresh and rested and his pleasure at this showed itself as naturally and unforcedly as his weariness and drowsiness had done the day before.

By his directness and assurance and his casual tone, the young man caused a stir in the little household. He knew at once and on every occasion what he wanted and what he needed and set about getting it without hesitation and with the fewest possible words and apologies. It was already clear after the first few days and their first conversations that between the Consul and his new officer there were not and could not be many points of contact and certainly no close communion. But each of them in his own way grasped and accepted this.

To Daville who was passing through that phase of life when everything is liable to become a point of conscience and a trouble to the soul, the arrival of young Desfossés brought, not relief, but fresh difficulties. It opened up in his mind a series of new problems which could neither be solved nor shirked, and ended by creating a still greater desolation and loneliness around him. To the young secretary, on the other hand, nothing seemed to present any problem at all or to offer any insuperable difficulty — and in any case, certainly not his superior, Daville.

Daville was a man nearly in his forties and Desfossés was just twenty-four. This disparity in age would have been no great matter in other times and in different circumstances. But

stormy times, bringing great changes and social upheavals, drive and deepen an unbridgeable rift between two generations and in fact make two worlds of them.

Daville remembered the old regime, but as a child; he had experienced the Revolution in all its phases, as part of his own personal life; he had met the First Consul and had become a supporter of his government with a zeal in which there was both suppressed doubt and boundless faith.

He had been twelve when, paraded with other children from middleclass homes, he had seen Louis XVI on a visit to their town. It was an unforgettable occasion for the imaginative mind of a boy who was always hearing at home that the whole family lived in fact "on the King's good grace". And now, before his very eyes, there passed by in person this same King who was the embodiment of everything great and fine that life could hold. Invisible trumpets sounded, cannon thundered and all the bells in the town rang at once. The people, arrayed in their best clothes, would have burst all the barriers in their enthusiasm. Through his own tears the lad saw tears in every eye and in his thro t there came that feeling of constriction which takes one at moments of great emotion. The King, himself much moved, ordered the coachman to drive at walking pace, waved his great hat in sweeping movements, and to the united shouts of "Long live the King" replied in a clear voice "Long live my people". All this the boy saw and heard as if it were part of some improbable dream of Paradise, until the enthusiastic crowd behind him tipped over his eyes his brand-new and rather too lofty hat, so that he could see nothing but the mist of his own tears, with a dancing of gold sparks and swimming streaks of blue. By the time he managed to lift his hat, it had all gone by like a dream, and there was nothing but the mass of flushed faces and flashing eyes around him.

Ten years later, as a young journalist of the Paris press, with the same tears in his eyes and the same hard and indissoluble lump in his throat, Daville had heard Mirabeau thunder against the old order and its abuses. The young man's enthusiasm sprang from the same source but its object was entirely different. Daville was himself changed and found himself in a completely changed world into which he had been cast by the Revolution and was

now swept along with irresistible force together with hundreds of thousands of young men like himself. It seemed as if the whole world were growing young again along with his own youth and that new vistas and unimagined opportunities were opening up on this dull earth. Everything suddenly became easy, rational and consistent, every effort took on a high significance, every step and every thought were filled with superhuman dignity and grandeur. It was no longer a case of the old royal bounty pouring forth upon a restricted number of men and families; it was a breaking forth of God's truth upon all humanity. Like all the rest, Daville was drunk with irrational happiness, as weak men always are when they succeed in finding some compendious and generally accepted formula which promises the realization of their emotional needs at the expense of other people's loss and ruin, while it frees them from the cares of conscience and responsibility.

Although he was only one of a throng of reporters at the sessions of the Constituent Assembly, it seemed to young Daville that his own reports, in which he retailed the speeches of the main participants or described the rousing scenes of patriotic and revolutionary fervour among their audience, had a permanent, universal significance, and his initials at the end of these reports seemed, when he saw them for the first time, like two mountains which nothing could surpass or scale. He seemed, not to be taking the minutes of the Assembly, but, with his own hands and with giant force, to be shaping the soul of mankind like obedient clay.

But these years went by and, sooner than he could have thought it possible, he saw the darker side of this Revolution which had bewitched his very soul. He remembered how that had begun. He had been awakened one morning by the buzzing of a crowd and had got up and opened the window wide. Suddenly he had found himself face to face with a severed head, nodding, all pale and bloody, on the pike of a sansculotte. His stomach, his poor Bohemian stomach which had been empty since the day before, heaved inside him and he was instantly sick. Then a terrible pain, like a cold and bitter fluid, ran right through his body. From that day on, for many years, life never ceased to ply him with this same drink, a draught to which no man

can ever quite become seasoned. He went on living and writing articles, he shouted with the crowd, but already he was racked with inner discords which he was unwilling, for a long time, to acknowledge even to himself and which he hid to the end from everyone else. And when the time came to decide about the King's life and the fate of the kingdom, when he had to choose between the bitter brew of the Revolution, which had once intoxicated him so powerfully, and the "royal bounty" on which he had been reared, the young man suddenly found himself once more on the other side.

In June 1792, after the first attack of the revolutionaries on the Court, a strong reaction set in among the more moderate men and subscriptions began to be collected for an address in which sympathy was expressed with the King and the Royal Family. Carried away on this wave of indignation against violence and disorder young Daville mastered his fears, silenced his hesitations and added his signature to those of twenty thousand other citizens of Paris. So great was the inner struggle which preceded this act of signature that it seemed to Daville as if his name were not lost among the twenty thousand other names, mostly of greater weight and better known than his own, but was written in letters of fire on the evening sky over Paris. He felt then how a man can break and divide against himself, how he can fall and rise in his own esteem; he learnt, in short, how transient our emotions are, how disordered and tangled while they last, how dearly bought and how bitterly repented when they pass away.

A month later began the great inquisition and arrest of suspicious persons and "bad citizens", and first of all, of the signatories of the address by the twenty thousand. To save himself from arrest and to obtain some reprieve and some issue from his inner conflicts, the young journalist Daville enlisted as a volunteer and was drafted to the war in the Pyrenees along the Spanish border. Here he saw that war is a harsh and terrible, but also a good and medicinal thing. He got to know the worth and the limits of his own bodily strength, he proved himself in danger, he learned to obey and to command, he became acquainted with suffering in all its forms but also with the beauty of comradeship and the notion of discipline.



Three years after his first great inward crises Daville had once again found his feet, settled and toughened by a soldier's life. Chance took him to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where a considerable confusion then prevailed and a purge was in progress. No one, from the Minister to the humblest secretary, was a career diplomat; everyone was engaged in learning from the beginning that skilled profession which had hitherto been the privilege of men of the old regime. When Talleyrand came to the Ministry, everything livened up and progress began to be made. Chance again directed that Talleyrand should notice young Daville's articles in the "*Moniteur*" and take him under his special protection.

Like so many tormented, weak and trembling souls, Daville, in his inner distresses and waverings, was lightened by one bright and constant star — the young general Bonaparte, the victor of Italy and the hope of all those who, like Daville, were seeking a middle way between the old regime and the Emigration on the one hand and the Revolution and the Terror on the other. And when he was appointed by Talleyrand to a Secretary's post in the new Cisalpine Republic, Daville, before going to take up his duties in Milan, was received by the General, who wished to give him personally some instructions for his representative, Citizen Trouvé. Daville knew well Napoleon's brother Lucien and had a recommendation from him; he was therefore received with some consideration, in a private apartment, after dinner.

When he came into the presence of this lean figure, with the strained white face, fiery eyes and cold glance, when he heard him speak, with a mixture of reason and passion, broad, bold, clear, alluring words, opening up unimagined prospects for which it might be worth a man's while to live, or die, it seemed to Daville that all his doubts and incomprehensions ceased to exist, that everything in the world grew calm and clear. All aims became attainable, all efforts became worth making and had a blessing on them from the beginning. His conversation with this exceptional man healed like a miraculous touch. All the sediment of past years was washed clean away from his spirit, all the stifled desires, all the torturing doubts found their goal and their justification. This extraordinary man directed them into the way of safety between extremes and contradictions which Daville, like

so many others, had for years been seeking passionately and in vain. And when, about midnight, the new secretary to the Cisalpine Republic left the General's house in the Rue Chantrennes, he felt all at once the same tears swimming in his eyes and the same hard, stubborn lump rising in his throat, as when in his boyhood he had waited for Louis XVI or when as a young man he had listened to the songs of the Revolution or Mirabeau's speeches. He felt exalted and intoxicated and, beneath his swallowing and his momentary blindness, he felt his blood beating in time with the world's great pulse, as it throbbed that night somewhere far above beneath the stars.

Once again the years went by. The lean general rose before the eyes of the world and travelled up the sky as the only sun that knew no setting. Daville changed posts and positions, dreamed of literary and political schemes, turning like all the rest of the world towards this sun. But his emotion, like all the emotions of weak men in great and stormy times, deceived him and failed to keep its promises; and Daville felt that he too, on his side was secretly betraying his emotion and was slowly becoming a stranger to it. How could this be happening to him? When did this inward cooling begin and how far had it gone? He could not answer his own question but he saw more clearly every day that it was so. Only this time everything was harder and more hopeless. The Revolution had swept away the old regime like a whirlwind, and Napoleon had come as the saviour from both, as a gift of Providence and that much desired 'middle way' of dignity and reason. Now the thought began to dawn that this road too might turn out to be a blind alley — just one of many aimless tracks — that the so-called "right road" just did not exist and that the life of men spent itself in an eternal quest for that right road and in an eternal retracing of the wrong roads along which men went. Even so, a further search must be made for the right path. After so many exaltations and collapses it was not as easy and simple as it had once been. Daville was no longer young, and time and his earlier inner crises, which had been both many and grievous, had worn him out; like so many of his contemporaries he longed for some quiet occupation and some permanency. Instead, the life of France moved with an ever swifter rhythm and followed more and more unfamiliar paths. And France

infected with this unrest an ever growing number of other nations and an ever wider circle of the countries about her. One by one they joined this ring of leaping, transported dervishes. For the last six years, from about the time of the Peace of Amiens, hope and doubt had begun to alternate in Daville, like the interplay of light and dark. After each victory of the First Consul, or later of the Emperor Napoleon, the middle way of salvation seemed to show firm and enduring; yet again, a few months after, everything pointed to an impasse. People began to get frightened. Everyone marched ahead but many began to look about them. During the few months he spent in Paris before his appointment at Travnik Daville had been able to observe in the looks of innumerable friends, as in a mirror, the same fear which, unacknowledged and repressed, reappeared continually in himself. Two years before, immediately after Napoleon's great victory in Prussia, Daville had written a poem, "The Battle of Jena", perhaps with the very object of silencing his doubts and dissipating his fear by a wholehearted celebration of the victorious Emperor. But just as he was proposing to give his poem to be printed, a fellow-countryman of his, an old friend who was a senior official in the Ministry of Marine, said to him over a glass of Calvados, "Do you know what you are celebrating and the man you are making so much of? Do you know that the Emperor is crazy — crazy! — and is kept up only by the blood of these victories of his which take us nowhere? Do you know that we are all rushing towards some great disaster to which neither you nor I can put a name but which is certainly in store for us after all our victories are over? You hadn't an idea? Well, you see, that's why you are able to write your poems in praise of these victories."

His friend had been a little drunk that evening but Daville could not forget his staring eyes, fixed upon a visionary future, nor his whispers which carried with them the whiff of alcohol but also the spirit of conviction. And men who were not drunk had whispered the same thought in other words or concealed it behind their worried looks. Daville resolved, nevertheless, to print his poem but he did so with hesitation and with equal misgivings as to the worth of the poetry and the permanence of the victories. This misgiving which was beginning to spread

abroad in the wider world, grew like a personal pain in Daville's own spirit.

Harbouring within himself this involved and gloomy state of mind, Daville had come as Consul to Travnik, and all his experiences there had done nothing to hearten or soothe him; on the contrary, he had been all the more shaken and alarmed.

All these feelings had been still further raised and enhanced in the Consul by his first contacts with the young man with whom he now had to live and work. Seeing how naturally he behaved and hearing how boldly and easily he expressed himself on every subject, Daville thought: "What is so terrible is not that we grow old and weak and die, but that behind us there comes breaking through a new and younger generation, quite different from ourselves. This is really what constitutes death. No one drags us towards the grave: they push us from behind." The Consul himself wondered how such thoughts could have entered his mind: they did not correspond at all with his natural way of thinking and he rejected them at once, ascribing them to the "Eastern poison" which sooner or later attacks every man and slowly insinuates itself even into his brain.

This young man, the only Frenchman in this wilderness and his one real colleague, was so utterly different from him in every respect (or so it appeared) that at times it seemed to Daville that he was living with a stranger and an enemy. But what most excited and annoyed him in the young man, was his attitude (or rather lack of an attitude) towards the "burning questions" which formed the whole content of Daville's own life, towards the Monarchy, the Revolution and Napoleon. To the Consul and the men of his generation these three concepts represented a terrible and tangled complex of conflicts, illusions, emotions, and high achievements, but also of doubts, inward misgivings and unseen struggles of conscience, never clearly resolved and with less and less hope of a lasting pacification. They stood for a great burden of pain which they had carried round with them since childhood and which would certainly go with them to the grave. Yet at the same time, and for this very reason, this burden of pain was as close and dear to them as their very life itself. But to this young man and his contemporaries — or so it seemed to Daville — these things caused not a moment's anguish or

perplexity and gave rise to no complaints or reflections. To them all these were simple, natural matters on which it was not worth while to waste one's words or to trouble one's head overmuch. The Monarchy was a fairy-tale, the Revolution a dark memory from one's childhood; the Empire was life itself, life and fortune, a natural and rational breeding ground of boundless possibilities, actions, exaltations and renown. In truth, to Desfossés the order in which he lived, in other words the Empire, represented the one and only reality and whether from a material or a spiritual point of view, it stretched from one end of his horizon to the other and embraced the whole of what life itself contained. To Daville, on the other hand, it was a merely accidental and brittle order of things, whose painful beginnings he had himself lived through at an earlier stage and had beheld with his own eyes and whose possibly provisional nature never entirely vanished from his mind. Unlike this young man, he remembered well what had been before this regime and often pondered upon what might come after it.

The world of "ideas" which to Daville's contemporaries was their spiritual home and their true life, seemed not to exist at all for the younger generation. For them its place was taken by "real life", the world of actuality, a world of tangible and visible facts, of measurable success and failure, a terrible new world which spread before Daville like a cold desert, more frightful than the blood, the torment and the spiritual cleavings of the Revolution. It was a generation, born in blood, stripped of everything, inured to everything, and tempered as if it had passed through fire.

Like everything else, Daville had no doubt generalized and exaggerated this, under the influence of a strange environment and difficult conditions. He often said as much to himself, since he had a natural dislike for contradictions and for any admission that they were eternal and irreconcilable. But there stood before him as a permanent reminder that young man with the sharp regard, self-possessed and sensual, fully at ease and highly conscious of himself, unburdened with considerations or doubts, seeing all things about him nakedly, as they were, and calling them regardlessly by their proper names. With all his gifts and his personal goodness he was a man of a new generation, that

"animalized" generation as Daville's contemporaries called it. So this was the fruit of the Revolution, the "free citizen", the "new man", thought Daville when he was left alone after a conversation with his junior. "Do revolutions perhaps beget monsters?" he asked himself in alarm. "Yes, they begin in greatness and moral purity, but they end by begetting monsters," was the answer he often gave himself. Then, at night, he felt dark thoughts assailing him more and more and threatening to subdue him, instead of his subduing them.

While Daville wrestled with his thoughts and with the dispositions of mind which the arrival of his young Vice-Consul aroused in him, the young man himself wrote as follows about Daville in the brief diary which he intended for friends in Paris: "The Consul is just as I had imagined him." He had derived his picture of him from his first reports from Travnik and, still more, from the account given by an older colleague of his at the Ministry, a man called Kerenne, who was renowned for knowing all the officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was able, in a few words, to give a more or less accurate "moral and physical portrait" of each. Kerenne was a shrewd and witty but otherwise sterile fellow, with whom the drawing of such oral portraits had become a passion raging in the blood. He devoted himself entirely to this barren task, which at times wore the look of an exact science and at others came nearer to ordinary scandal, and he could always repeat the sketch of a given personality word for word, as if he had a printed text of it in his head. What Kerenne had said to him about his future chief, Daville, was this:

"Jean Daville came into the world as a sound, upright — and mediocre — man. The whole of his nature, his origins and his education formed him to live a quiet, monotonous life, without rising high or falling heavily, and in general, without sudden changes. A plant for a temperate climate. He has a natural tendency to become easily excited and enthusiastic over ideas or persons and he has a particular inclination towards poetry and poetic states of mind: but none of this goes beyond a happy mediocrity. Peaceful times and happy circumstances make mediocre men still more mediocre, but stormy times and great changes make them into complex characters. That is the case

with our friend Daville, who has constantly found himself in the middle of great events. None of these could change his real nature but alongside his native characteristics they brought out in him new and contrary qualities. Since he cannot be, and does not know how to be, inconsiderate, ruthless, conscienceless or malicious, he has protected and maintained himself by becoming timid, secretive and cautious to the point of superstition. By nature he is hale, honourable, cheerful and enterprising, but time has made him sensitive, undecided, slow, mistrustful and inclined to melancholy; and as none of this corresponds with his true character, it has produced an extraordinary cleavage of his personality. In short, he is one of those men who are the destined victims of great historical events since they are not in a position either to withdraw themselves from such events as characters of exceptional strength can do, nor can they entirely come to terms with events as crowds of ordinary people manage to do. He is the kind of man who is always complaining and so long as he lives he will always complain of everything in life and of life itself — a very common state of affairs in our times”, this colleague concluded.

With such radical differences between them, these two men began their life together. Although the autumn was cold and wet, Desfossés visited the town and its neighbourhood and got to know a fair number of people. Daville presented him to the Vizier and to the principal figures at the Residency but the young man did the rest himself. He got to know the priest at Dolac, Fra Ivo Janković, a man of a hundred and four okes\* in weight but with a lively mind and a shrewd tongue. He met Pakhomi, the pale and patient monk who then served the Orthodox church of St. Michael the Archangel. He entered the houses of the Travnik Jews. He visited the monastery at Guča Gora and there struck up an acquaintance with some of the Brothers, who supplied him with facts about the country and the people. He made ready to explore the old settlements and graveyards in the country round about, as soon as the snow thawed. Already, after three weeks, he had informed Daville of his intention to write a book on Bosnia.

The Consul, who had grown up and had been schooled in the classical education of pre-Revolutionary times, had always

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\* See footnote on page 77

moved within the limits which that education sets to thought and expression, even though he had shared the experience of the Revolution. He therefore looked with suspicion and disfavour on this undoubtedly gifted young man, on his immense intellectual curiosity and amazing memory, as well as on his forward and unconventional manner of speech and the enviable abundance of his mind. He was scared by this youthful positiveness, which nothing could check and which nothing put out of its stride. He found it hard to bear and yet felt that there was no way of curbing or stopping it. The young man had learned Turkish in Paris for three years and conversed freely and at first hand with everybody. ("He knows Turkish as it is taught at the College of Louis le Grand in Paris but not as the Turks speak it in Bosnia", wrote Daville). If he did not always succeed in making himself clear, he somehow attracted people with his broad smile and sparkling eyes. Even the Brothers, who avoided Daville, and the sombre, mistrustful Orthodox monk talked to him: only the notables of Travnik still remained unapproachable; but the town could not maintain its indifference in the face of the "young Consul".

Desfossés never missed a market day without going round the whole bazaar. He enquired the prices, inspected the goods and noted names and designations. People collected round this stranger in Western dress and eyed him as he tried a sieve or examined with attention some display of drills or chisels. "The young Consul" spent long in watching how a peasant buys a scythe, how carefully he feels the edge with the hard-worn thumb of his left hand, how long, after that, he strikes the scythe on the stone kerb and with strained attention listens to its ring, how at last he squints down the blade with one eye closed, as if he were aiming a gun, and sizes up its keenness and temper. He would go up to the hard-bitten, prematurely aged peasant women and ask them the price of the wool which lay in front of them on a sack, smelling of the sheepfolds. Seeing a foreigner before her, the woman would at first be confused, thinking that the gentleman was making fun of her. But finally, at the kavass's insistence, she would tell the price and swear that the wool was "soft as a soul", when once it had been washed. He asked the names of the different kinds of corn and seed, appraised the



solidity and size of the grain. He took an interest in the varieties and the workmanship and the type of wood employed for the different sorts of haft and handle for axes, hoes, pruning-shears and other implements.

The "young Consul" got to know all the chief personalities in the bazaar — Ibrahim Aga the weighman; the crier Hamza and the fool of the bazaar, 'Mad Fritz'.

Ibrahim Aga was a tall, thin, bent old man with a grey beard and a stern, dignified presence. He had once been well off, and used to run the public scales himself; his sons and assistants measured and assessed everything which came for sale in the market, and he supervised them. In the course of time he became poor and was left without assistants or sons. Now the Jews of Travnik run the public scales and pay the weighman, and Ibrahim Aga acts merely as their employee, but this is not generally realized in the bazaar. To the peasants and to everyone who buys or sells, the one true weighman is Ibrahim Aga and will remain so until he dies. Every market day he stands by the scales from morning till dusk. When he starts weighing, a solemn silence falls all about him. As he arranges the scales he holds his breath, and with solemn concentration, rises and falls with the gentle oscillation of the scale-pan. With one eye closed, he scrupulously adjusts the weights and carefully moves the counter-weight away from the goods being weighed, first a little, then a fraction of a little, until the scale ceases to sway, stands still and shows the true weight. Then Ibrahim Aga parts his hands, raises his face, not taking his eyes from the figures, and calls out in a clear, stern voice which admits of no discussion, the number of okes:\*

"Sixty one less twenty drams".

There is no disputing this measure. Generally, in the middle of all the turmoil of the market, there prevails around him a small circle of order, silence and the respect which all men show for true weight and honest work. Ibrahim Aga's whole character is such that it will allow of nothing else; and when some suspicious peasant whose stuff is being weighed comes too near the scales in order to see and verify the number of okes from behind

\* As a dry measure, the oke was equivalent to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  English pounds; as a liquid measure, to rather more than an imperial quart. (Tr.)

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the back of the weighman, Ibrahim Aga at once puts his hand on the counterweight, stops weighing, and chases the intruder away:

"Get back! Do you want to shove yourself forward and cough into the scales? True measure's a treasure; and a breath can spoil it. And it's my soul that'll roast for it, not yours. Off with you!"

So Ibrahim Aga spends his life in fond attention to his scales, living with them, for them and by them, the incarnate example of what a man can make of his vocation whatever it may be.

This same Ibrahim Aga, who guards his immortal soul against the least error in his weighing, Desfossés had seen beating a Christian peasant unmercifully in the middle of the market and before the eyes of the whole world. The peasant had brought for sale ten axe-hafts and had leant them against a white-washed wall of the kind which usually surrounds abandoned graveyards and the ruins of old mosques. Ibrahim Aga, who supervises the market places, flew at the peasant in a rage and kicked over all his axe-hafts, spitting and menacing the frightened countryman, who gathered up his scattered goods.

"That's the wall of a mosque, you son of a pig, and you must go leaning your filthy axes against it! None of your Christian bell-ringing here yet, and none of your organ-blowing, you son of a hog!"

Everybody went on shopping, bargaining, measuring goods and working out sums without paying the least attention to this dispute. The peasant had succeeded in collecting all his stuff and had disappeared into the crowd. (When he got home, Desfossés noted: "Turkish government has two faces. To us their proceedings are illogical and incomprehensible and constantly cause us bewilderment and amazement").

Hamza the crier was quite a different person, with a different way of life. He had once been famous for his voice and for his manly beauty. He had been a wastrel and an idler from his early youth, and one of the worst drunkards in Travnik. In his younger years he had been well-known for his bold wit. His pithy and pregnant repartees are still remembered and repeated. When asked why he had chosen the crier's of all trades, he replied

"Because it's the lightest work there is." Once, some years ago, when Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak went with an army against Montenegro and burnt Drobnjak, Hamza was ordered to proclaim this great Turkish victory and to give out that a hundred and eighty Montenegrin heads had been cut off. One of the crowd which always gathers round the crier asked aloud, "And how many of ours were lost?" "Ah, that'll be given out by the crier in Montenegro," replied Hamza calmly and went on with the announcement set down for him.

A man of irregular life, Hamza's singing and crying had long ago ruined his throat. He no longer roused the bazaar with his former voice of thunder, but in a hoarse piping voice he managed with a great effort to announce official and market news, heard only by those who happened to be near him. But the idea never entered anybody's head that Hamza should be replaced by someone younger and louder, nor had Hamza himself the least notion that he no longer had any voice. Using the same attitude and the same gestures as those with which he had once sent his famous voice ringing down the alleys, he now made the necessary announcements to the world as best he could. Children gathered round him, laughing at these gestures of his which had long ceased to correspond to his forced croaking, and gazing with curiosity and horror at his bull neck, which quivered with the strain as he intoned. Nevertheless, these children were a necessity to him, since they were the only ones who heard his feeble cries and they at once spread the news about the town.

Desfossés and Hamza soon became friends, as the "young Consul" occasionally bought some ornament or rug which Hamza was crying and on which he made a fine profit.

"Mad Fritz" had been a figure for years in the bazaar at Travnik. He was an idiot of unknown origin, from somewhere over the border, and as the Turks never touch idiots, he lived on here, sleeping under shop counters and feeding on charity. He was a man of giant strength and when he had a little brandy inside him, they always used to play the same rough trick on him in the bazaar. On market days they used to give him a nip or two to drink and thrust a cudgel into his hand. The idiot then used to stop Christian peasants and start to drill them, always with the same words: "*Halbrechts! Links! Marsch!*" (Half-right! Left!

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This same Ibrahim Aga, who guards his immortal soul against the least error in his weighing, Desfossés had seen beating a Christian peasant unmercifully in the middle of the market and before the eyes of the whole world. The peasant had brought for sale ten axe-hafts and had leant them against a white-washed wall of the kind which usually surrounds abandoned graveyards and the ruins of old mosques. Ibrahim Aga, who supervises the market places, flew at the peasant in a rage and kicked over all his axe-hafts, spitting and menacing the frightened countryman, who gathered up his scattered goods.

"That's the wall of a mosque, you son of a pig, and you must go leaning your filthy axes against it! None of your Christian bell-ringing here yet, and none of your organ-blowing, you son of a hog!"

Everybody went on shopping, bargaining, measuring goods and working out sums without paying the least attention to this dispute. The peasant had succeeded in collecting all his stuff and had disappeared into the crowd. (When he got home, Desfossés noted: "Turkish government has two faces. To us their proceedings are illogical and incomprehensible and constantly cause us bewilderment and amazement").

Hamza the crier was quite a different person, with a different way of life. He had once been famous for his voice and for his manly beauty. He had been a wastrel and an idler from his early youth, and one of the worst drunkards in Travnik. In his younger years he had been well-known for his bold wit. His pithy and pregnant repartees are still remembered and repeated. When asked why he had chosen the crier's of all trades, he replied

"Because it's the lightest work there is." Once, some years ago, when Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak went with an army against Montenegro and burnt Drobnjak, Hamza was ordered to proclaim this great Turkish victory and to give out that a hundred and eighty Montenegrin heads had been cut off. One of the crowd which always gathers round the crier asked aloud, "And how many of ours were lost?" "Ah, that'll be given out by the crier in Montenegro," replied Hamza calmly and went on with the announcement set down for him.

A man of irregular life, Hamza's singing and crying had long ago ruined his throat. He no longer roused the bazaar with his former voice of thunder, but in a hoarse piping voice he managed with a great effort to announce official and market news, heard only by those who happened to be near him. But the idea never entered anybody's head that Hamza should be replaced by someone younger and louder, nor had Hamza himself the least notion that he no longer had any voice. Using the same attitude and the same gestures as those with which he had once sent his famous voice ringing down the alleys, he now made the necessary announcements to the world as best he could. Children gathered round him, laughing at these gestures of his which had long ceased to correspond to his forced croaking, and gazing with curiosity and horror at his bull neck, which quivered with the strain as he intoned. Nevertheless, these children were a necessity to him, since they were the only ones who heard his feeble cries and they at once spread the news about the town.

Desfossés and Hamza soon became friends, as the "young Consul" occasionally bought some ornament or rug which Hamza was crying and on which he made a fine profit.

"Mad Fritz" had been a figure for years in the bazaar at Travnik. He was an idiot of unknown origin, from somewhere over the border, and as the Turks never touch idiots, he lived on here, sleeping under shop counters and feeding on charity. He was a man of giant strength and when he had a little brandy inside him, they always used to play the same rough trick on him in the bazaar. On market days they used to give him a nip or two to drink and thrust a cudgel into his hand. The idiot then used to stop Christian peasants and start to drill them, always with the same words: "*Halbrechts! Links! Marsch!*" (Half-right! Left!

March!) The peasants used to retreat or run clumsily away, since they knew that Mad Fritz was doing this at the bidding of the Turks and Fritz used to scatter them, to the amusement of the younger shopkeepers and the idle Agas.

One market day Desfossés was returning to the Consulate after a tour of inspection in the bazaar. A kavass was walking behind him. When they reached the place where the market square narrows and passes into the bazaar, Mad Fritz thrust himself in the way. The young man saw before him a giant with a square head and wicked green eyes. The drunken idiot blinked at the stranger, then ran forward, seized the beam of a balance from one of the shops and made straight at him. "*Halbrechts! Marsch!*" The market folk behind their counters began to crane out in the malicious expectation of seeing the 'young Consul' hopping before Mad Fritz. But the affair took a different turn. Before the kavass could run up, Desfossés stepped from under the beam which was being brandished over his head and with swift, neat movements grabbed the madman by the wrist, then threw his whole weight sideways, swinging the man round like a stuffed doll, big as he was. While the idiot was spinning in this fashion round the tall young man, the beam flew out of his clenched fist in a great curve and fell to the ground. At this point the kavass came running with a small gun in his hand; but the idiot was mastered, with his right hand twisted helplessly and painfully behind him. In this condition Desfossés handed him over to the kavass, while he picked up the beam from the ground and quietly leant it against the shop where it had been before. The madman gazed with a distorted face, now at his hurt hand, now at the young stranger, who shook his finger admonishingly, as at a child, and said with his clipped, bookish accent: "You're a rascal! You're not to be a rascal". Then he called the kavass and quietly went on his way, leaving the shopkeepers gaping in their shops.

Daville took the young man sternly to task for this incident, pointing out that he had been right in advising him not to go on foot through the bazaar, since one could never know what there ill-disposed, rough and idle folk might intend and do. But Davna, who otherwise had no great liking for Desfossés and no understanding of his free and easy manners, had to admit to Daville that the bazaar was speaking of the "young Consul" with admiration.



The "young Consul" went on visiting the neighbourhood nevertheless, in the rain and the mud. He tackled people without the least reserve, chatted with them and managed to see and know things which Daville, serious, stiff and upright as he was, could never have seen or known. Daville, who in his bitterness of heart regarded everything Turkish and Bosnian with repulsion and mistrust, did not see much point or much advantage to the service in these excursions and reports of Desfossés. The young man's optimism annoyed him, so did his passion for delving more deeply into the past, the customs and beliefs of these people, his habit of explaining away their faults, and lastly, his disinterment of their good side, distorted and smothered as it was by the extraordinary conditions in which they were obliged to live. This work seemed to Daville a fruitless waste of time and a pernicious deviation from the right path. Consequently, conversations between him and his Vice-Consul on these questions always ended in disputes or petered out in offended silence.

One cold autumn afternoon Desfossés had returned from his wanderings wet, ruddy-faced, thoroughly chilled, full of impressions and the need to talk of them. Daville who had already been pacing for hours up and down the heated and lighted dining-room, revolving melancholy thoughts, received him at first with astonishment. The breathless young man had eaten ravenously and had given a lively account of his visit to Dolac, a crowded Catholic settlement, and of the difficulty he had had in covering the short distance between Dolac and Travnik.

"I don't think that in these days there can be another country in Europe as roadless as Bosnia", said Daville who ate slowly and without appetite, since he was not feeling at all hungry. "Compared with all the rest of the world, these people have a kind of blind, perverse hatred of roads, which do indeed stand for progress and prosperity. In this wretched country the roads are not kept up and do not last; it's as if they wantonly ruined themselves. You'll see, the fact that General Marmont is building a great highway through Dalmatia does us harm with the local Turks here, even with the Vizier, far more than our enterprising and boastful gentlemen at Split can imagine. These folk don't want a road anywhere near them. But who's to explain that to our people at Split? They are always congratulating themselves that they are

building roads which will make communication easier between Bosnia and Dalmatia and they don't know how suspiciously the Turks take it."

"Well, it's not to be wondered at. The case is clear. So long as the Turks rule as they do and conditions in Bosnia are what they are, it's useless to talk of roads and communications. On the contrary, both Turks and Christians, though for different reasons, are equally against the opening up and maintenance of traffic lines everywhere. Only today that showed quite clearly in a conversation with my friend Fra Ivo, the fat priest at Dolac. I was complaining how steep and worn the road was from Travnik to Dolac and wondering why the people from Dolac who have to go over that road every day of their lives, didn't do something to put in order at least that stretch of it. The Brother looked at me, first, with half a smile, as at someone who doesn't know what he is talking about, then he gave a knowing wink and said in a whisper, 'My good sir, the worse the road is, the less often we have Turkish visitors. We should be happiest of all if we could put an impassable mountain between them and us. As far as we ourselves are concerned, it is no great trouble to us to get through any time we need to. We're used to bad roads and every kind of difficulty. In fact we live on difficulties. Never tell anyone what I am telling you now, but rest assured that as long as the Turks rule at Travnik, we don't need a better road. Between ourselves, whenever the Turks mend it, our people break and hack it up at the first rain or snow. At any rate that helps to discourage unwelcome guests.' Having finished his speech, the Brother opened his other eye, thrilled with his own cunning, and begged me once again not to say a word to anyone. Well, that's one reason why the roads are no good. A second reason is the Turks themselves. Every line of communication with Christian foreigners means opening a door to the enemy's influence, giving him a chance to work on the *rayah* and to threaten Turkish domination. Besides, Monsieur Daville, we French have swallowed half Europe and we mustn't be surprised if those countries we have not yet occupied look with suspicion on the roads which bring our armies to their frontiers."

"I know, I know," interrupted Daville, "but roads have got to be built all over Europe and we really can't take account of backward peoples like the Turks and Bosnians."

"Those who consider that roads must be built naturally build them. That means they need them. But what I am trying to explain is why, on the contrary, people here don't want roads and consider that they don't need them and that they would do more harm than good."

As always, Davillé was angered by the younger man's need to explain and justify everything he saw here.

"It's quite indefensible," said the Consul, "and quite beyond explanation on any intelligible ground. The backwardness of these people comes in the first place from their bad character, their 'native malice', as the Vizier calls it. Their malice explains everything."

"Very well, but how do you explain the bad character itself? What is the cause of that?"

"The cause, the cause? They're born with it, I tell you. You'll have every chance to convince yourself of that."

"Very well, but until such time as I am convinced, allow me to stand by my own view that the badness and goodness of a people are the result of the conditions in which it lives and develops. It's no kind of goodness which is driving us to build roads, it is the need and the wish to extend useful contacts and to extend our influence, and a good many people would consider that, in their turn, as our own brand of malice. So our bad character drives us to open roads and theirs drives them to hate and destroy them whenever possible."

"You're carrying things rather far, my young friend!"

"No, it's life that carries things far, further than we can follow it. I am only trying to explain individual facts, without being able at all to understand the whole picture."

"One can't explain or understand everything," said Daville wearily and in a rather superior tone of voice.

"One can't, but everything is worth trying to explain."

Desfossés, whom the food and wine had warmed up after his ride in cold weather and whose youth drove him to think aloud, went on with his story.

"Well, however one may account for it, this same shrewd and discreet priest from Dolac, who has a very sound intelligence and a sense of realities, gave a sermon last Sunday. In this sermon,

from what our Catholic kavass tells me, the priest asserted of a pious Brother who had recently died in the monastery at Fojnica, that he had been, if not a saint, at any rate in direct contact with the saints and it was known for certain that a special angel brought him every night a letter from some saint or from the Mother of God herself."

"Ah, you don't yet know the fanaticism of these people."

"Very well, call it fanaticism but that's a word which explains nothing."

Daville, who was a "sage and moderate Liberal", disliked even the most innocent discussions on religious questions.

"It explains everything," said Daville rather testily. "Why don't our preachers tell stories of that kind.?"

"Because we don't live in these conditions, Monsieur Daville. I wonder what we should be preaching if we were living as the Christians here have been for the last three hundred years. Heaven and earth could not contain miracles enough to arm our faith in the battle with the conquering Turk. Believe me, when I look at these people and listen to them, I become more and more convinced how wrong we are when, as we conquer Europe country by country, we want to introduce everywhere our own ideas and our own strictly and exclusively rational ways of life and government. It seems to me more and more a senseless effort which cannot possibly prevail. It's nonsense to try to remove abuses and prejudices when you haven't the strength and there is no possibility of removing the causes which evoked and created them."

"That argument would take us a long way," Daville interrupted his Vice-Consul. "Never fear, there's someone who is thinking all that out." And the Consul rose from the table and rang sharply and impatiently for the table to be cleared.

Whenever, with the sincerity and freedom which were native to him, of which he was quite unaware and which Daville secretly envied him, the young man began to criticize the Imperial regime, Daville quivered and lost his control and patience. It was precisely because he himself was in two minds and harboured hidden and unacknowledged doubts that he could not listen, calmly to the criticisms of others. He felt as if this carefree, rash young man were uncovering and touching with his finger his own tenderest

spot, when he wanted not only to keep it concealed from the rest of the world but, if possible, to forget about it himself.

Literature was another subject about which Daville could not talk to Desfossés, and still less about his own literary work. This was a point on which Daville was particularly sensitive. For as long as he could remember, he had been putting together literary compositions of various kinds, hammering out verses and thinking out situations. Once, ten years ago, he had even edited the literary column of the "*Moniteur*" and had attended the sessions of literary societies and salons. All that had stopped when he went back into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and went as Chargé d'Affaires to Malta and then to Naples, but he had continued with his literary work.

The verses which Daville published in the press from time to time, or wrote out in an ornamental hand and sent to high personages, seniors and friends were neither much better nor much worse than thousands of other poetical outpourings of the day. Daville styled himself "a professed disciple of the great Boileau" and in articles which nobody ever dreamed of challenging, he was the uncompromising champion of the strict classical rule, defending poetry alike from the outworn influence of the merely fanciful, from poetic excesses and from the spirit of disorder. Inspiration was essential, Daville asserted in his articles, but it must be guided by the rational temperance and sound sense without which no work of art does or can exist. Daville laid so much stress on these principles of his that he left the reader with the impression that he set more store by order and strict measure in poetry than by poetry itself, as if order and measure were perpetually threatened by poets and poetry and must at all costs be helped and protected. His pattern among contemporary poets was Jacques Delille, the poet of "*Les Jardins*" and the translator of Virgil. In defence of Delille's poetry Daville had printed a series of articles in the "*Moniteur*," of which, once again, no one had taken the least notice, either by way of praise or of refutation.

For years past Daville had been occupied with plans for a massive epic on Alexander the Great. Conceived in twenty-four books, this epic had become a sort of disguised spiritual diary of Daville himself. All his experience of the world, all his

thoughts on Napoleon, on war and politics, all his desires and disapprovals had been transposed into the distant times and obscure circumstances in which his chief hero had lived and there he had given them free rein and had endeavoured to carve them up into regular verses, more or less strictly rhymed. Daville's life was bound up with his composition to such a degree that, besides the names of Jules-François, he gave his second child in addition the name of the Macedonian King Amyntas, the grandfather of Alexander the Great. Bosnia too came to life in his "Alexandriad", as a poverty-stricken land with a harsh climate and savage people, but under the name of Tauris. Mehmed Pasha and the Travnik notables and the Bosnian friars figured somewhere in it, together with all the others with whom Daville had had to work or contend, described and disguised under the form of one of Alexander the Great's officers or opponents. The whole of Daville's loathing of the oriental spirit and of the East generally was here expressed in the struggle of his hero against distant Asia.

As he rode above Travnik and looked at the roofs and minarets of the town, Daville often composed a mental description of some imaginary city which Alexander was at that moment conquering. As he sat with the Vizier and looked at the silent throng of attendants and pages, he often filled out in his mind the description of a session of the Senate in the besieged city of Tyre from the third book of his epic. Like all writers who lack the gift and the true vocation, Daville had ineradicably planted in him the delusion that a man can arrive at poetry by a certain deliberate exercise of the mind, and that in the composing of poetry there are to be found consolations or rewards for the troubles with which life loads and surrounds us.

As a young man Daville had often asked himself whether he was a poet or not. Had his work in this art real significance and vision, or not? Now, after so many years and so much effort had failed to bring success, even if they had not actually brought failure, it might have been clear that Daville was not a poet. Meanwhile, as often happens, Daville worked at his poetry more and more persistently as the years went on, mechanically and monotonously, no longer putting to himself that question which youth, in its bold and straightforward self-assessment and

judgement, puts to itself so often. When he was younger and so long as he still occasionally found someone to recognize and encourage him, he wrote less, but now, just as the time had come when no one any longer took him seriously as a poet, he worked regularly and with diligence. Dull habit and application had taken the place of the unconscious need for expression and the delusive strength of his youth; for application; that virtue which so often manifests itself where it is out of place or when it is no longer needed, has always been the solace of ungifted writers and a disaster to the arts. Exceptional circumstances, the loneliness and tedium to which he had been condemned for years, had driven Daville increasingly on to this barren sidetrack and into this innocent sin he called poetry. In reality, Daville had been on a sidetrack ever since the day when he wrote his first line, since he had never been capable of a true bond of union with poetry. He had no feeling for it in its most direct expression, still less could he evoke or create it.

The spectacle of evil in the world aroused in Daville either indignation or depression, the spectacle of good enthusiasm and satisfaction, a kind of moral exaltation. But from these moral reactions which were genuinely alive and astir in him, though fitfully and not always steadily, he produced verses lacking in everything which makes poetry; and it must be said that the fashion of the time merely confirmed him in this false conception.

And so, with more and more persistence as the years went by, Daville continued to make middling faults out of his not inconsiderable virtues and to demand of poetry what it can never offer, easy moral comfort and harmless intellectual exercise and pastime.

It will readily be understood that young Desfossés, being what he was, was not the ideal audience or critic nor was he the right partner for a literary conversation. Thus there opened between the Consul and his junior an immense new cleavage, to which the Consul was particularly sensitive. An endless capacity for facts, rapidity in sifting them and boldness in drawing conclusions from them were the chief characteristics of the young man's mind. Knowledge and intuition worked together in him and complemented each other in a miraculous way. In spite of all their disagreements and in spite of his own personal feeling

of repulsion the Consul could not fail to see that. At times it seemed to him as if this youth of twenty four had read whole libraries, without at the same time attaching any particular importance to the fact. And indeed the young man was always causing his partner fresh exasperation by the variety of his knowledge and the audacity of his judgements. He would talk lightly of the history of Egypt or the relations of the Spanish South American colonies with their motherland or of oriental languages or of religious and racial conflicts anywhere in the world, of the aims and prospects of Napoleon's Continental System or of communications or tariffs. He would unexpectedly introduce quotations from the classics, usually from lesser known passages and always in some unconventional context and in a new light. And although in many of these instances the Consul found more youthful pose and exuberance than consistency and solid value, he always listened to the young man's disquisitions with a kind of awe-stricken and hostile astonishment but also with a painful feeling of his own weakness and inadequacy which he tried in vain to overcome and repress.

Ah well, the young fellow was deaf and blind to what Daville held dearest and what seemed to him the sole thing worthy of respect besides his duty to the State. Desfossés openly avowed that he did not care for verse and that contemporary French poetry seemed to him irrational, utterly insincere, colourless and unnecessary. At the same time the young man did not for a moment deny himself the right and satisfaction of criticizing and of talking freely and regardlessly, without malice but also without respect or very much thought, about the very thing for which by his own admission he had neither feeling nor liking. Thus, for example, of Delille, the adored Delille, he at once felt able to say that he was a clever frequenter of salons who earned a fee of six francs a line and that Madame Delille used to lock him up every day and not let him out of his room until he had completed a fixed number of verses. This irreverence of the younger generation sometimes maddened Daville and sometimes shattered him. It contributed, in any case, to make him feel more isolated than ever.

It sometimes happened that, driven by the need to express and communicate his feelings, Daville would forget everything



else and begin a warm and intimate conversation about his literary views and plans — a quite understandable weakness in his circumstances. And so one evening he gave a complete outline of his epic on Alexander the Great, with an exposition of all the moral trends which underlay his epic work. Without pausing for a moment to consider the validity of these thoughts and conceptions which made up the brighter half of the Consul's life, the young man, all brisk and smiling, suddenly began to recite from Boileau:

“Que crois-tu qu’Alexandre, en ravageant la terre,  
Cherche parmi l’horreur, le tumulte et la guerre?  
Possédé d’un ennui qu’il ne saurait dompter,  
Il craint d’être à lui-même et songe à s’éviter.”

What do you imagine Alexander, as he lays waste the  
earth,  
Is seeking amid horror, tumult and war?  
Possessed by a tedium he cannot master,  
He fears to be left to his own resources and longs to  
escape from himself.

He added immediately by way of apology that he had once read the lines in one of the Satires and happened to have remembered them.

Daville at once felt both insulted and hurt and immeasurably lonelier than he had been a few minutes before. There seemed to stand before him, in palpable form, the very picture and pattern of the ‘new generation’. It was a generation of diabolical restlessness, of destructive mind, rapid and morbid in its mental associations. It was a generation which “did not care for poetry” but nevertheless turned its attention to poetry — only, however, when to do so might serve its perverse desires, dragging everything in the world down to earth, belittling and humiliating it, its one aim being to reduce everything to what is worst and lowest in man.

Although he gave no sign of his disgust (for such in fact it was), Daville at once broke off the conversation and retired to his room. For a long time he could not get to sleep and even in sleep he still felt the bitter sting which may be left by a quite innocent remark. For some days he could not bring himself to touch or unfold the manuscript, which lay in its cardboard

folder, tied with green string; his beloved work seemed to him to have been desecrated and coarsely held up to jest.

Desfossés, on the other hand, did not realize for one moment that he might have offended the Consul in any way. Rather, for him the lines of Boileau had been a choice occasion for the exercise of his remarkable memory. It was satisfactory that he should have remembered them so *à propos*, and it never entered his head that they might have a real inner connection with Daville's writings or might offend Daville in any way or might affect relations between them. It has always been so. Any two consecutive generations always find it hardest to tolerate one another and in fact know each other least. But like the majority of quarrels, most of these bickerings and disputes between different generations rest on misunderstanding.

What particularly poisoned the Consul's sleepless nights and his appalling dreams was the idea that this young man who had so outraged him that evening and of whom he thought with bitter disapproval was now sleeping deep and sound, a sleep as natural and as callously complacent as everything he did and said by day. Yet this part of his indignation at least the Consul might well have spared himself since he was in fact mistaken. Not everyone sleeps in blissful peace who by day laughs serenely and moves freely among his fellow men. Young Desfossés was not merely and exclusively a lusty, careless youth of the "new type", the fortunate child of a fortunate Empire, precociously mature and burdened with knowledge; he was not merely this and nothing beside, as it so often seemed to Daville. That night each of the two Frenchmen suffered his own private pain, each after his fashion, and with no possibility of completely understanding the other. Desfossés too in his own way paid his tribute to new surroundings and strange ways. His resources for the struggle might be more powerful and more numerous than Daville's, yet he too suffered from boredom and the "Bosnian silence" and felt this country and the life he led in it gnawing at him, working on him, striving to bend or break him and so to bring him down to the level of all about him. It is no simple or easy matter to be hurled at the age of twenty-four from Paris to Turkish Travnik, to harbour wishes and plans which reach far beyond and above one's immediate surroundings and to

have to wait in patience while all the gathering powers of youth and all its unsatisfied desires struggle and rebel against any delay.

It had begun at Split, already. It was like being bound in with an invisible iron hoop. Everything required an extra effort and one felt at the same time less equal to making it. Every step was harder, every decision slower and its execution more uncertain, while behind it all there lurked, like a perpetual threat, mistrust, poverty and the sense that nothing could be done. It was the East declaring itself.

The local commander who had placed a disreputable carriage at his disposal (and that only as far as Sinj), with horses for his gear and an escort of four, had been preoccupied, surly, almost malicious. Though young, Desfossés was well acquainted with this frame of mind, which long wars induce in people. For years they have all had to carry on, as it were, under a heavy load, each dragging some distressful burden of his own; no one is in his proper place and in consequence each man is seeing how he can pass on something of his burden to another, how he can lighten his own even a little, by hearty abuse or sharp words if in no other way. Thus the general disgruntlement rolls and transfers itself continually from place to place and from man to man and by keeping on the move becomes, if not lighter, at least more tolerable.

That was what Desfossés felt, as soon as he had made the mistake of asking whether the carriage had strong springs and a soft seat. The commander had looked fixedly at him with a light in his eye like a drunken man's.

"It's the best that can be found in this bloody country. Anyhow, the man who goes to Turkey on duty needs a steel arse."

Without flinching the young man looked straight at him and replied with a smile: "That wasn't in my orders from Paris."

The officer bit his lip slightly when he saw that he had to do with someone who did not run away from difficulties but he at once seized on the chance to talk and grouse as a relief.

"Ah well, you see, Monsieur, we didn't get much of that sort of thing in our orders either. That's just put in as an extra. On the spur of the moment . . ." and the officer made a cynical gesture as of one writing out a return.

With this backhanded blessing the young man started off along the dusty roads and then up the steep, bare, stony slopes which rise behind Split, travelling further and further from the sea, from the last civilized buildings and the last rich vegetation, to descend on the other side of the rocky ridges towards another kind of sea, into this Bosnia, which for him was the first great test on his entry into life. As he penetrated deeper and deeper into the wild, bare mountain country, he noticed the straggling rows of huts and the shepherd-girls along the roads, lost among rocks and thorn-bushes, with their distaffs in their hands and with no flock visible beside them. And looking at it all, he asked himself whether this was the worst, just as a man who has to undergo an operation asks himself at each moment whether this is that highest peak of pain of which they told him or whether he must expect yet higher and sharper.

All these were the qualms and fears which youth allows itself. In reality the young man was ready for anything and was sure that he would go through with it. When after a journey of ten miles he paused at the stony pass above Klis and gazed at the naked wilderness which opened before him and at the pale hillsides, sprinkled with patches of greyish green, there was wafted towards him from the further side, from Bosnia, the silence of a new world such as he had never known before. The young man shook and shivered, more from this silence and from the desolation of the new prospect than from the fresh breeze blowing up the defile. He pulled his cloak about his shoulders, settled himself more firmly on his horse and plunged into this new world of stillness and uncertainty. Bosnia, that silent land, was casting its shadow before, and already there could be felt in the air a cold anguish, not uttered in words and without visible cause.

They passed through Sinj and Livno well enough. At Ku-preško Polje an unexpected snowstorm fell upon them. The Turkish guide who was awaiting them at the frontier managed by strenuous efforts to lead them as far as the first khan. There, exhausted and frozen, they collapsed about the fire by which a number of people were already sitting. Although tired, cold and hungry, the young man held himself up and kept a cheerful appearance, bearing in mind the impression he would leave on

these strangers. He rubbed his face with eau-de-cologne and did a few of his ordinary exercises, while the others looked at him out of the corners of their eyes, as at a man who is performing some rite prescribed by his law. But when he sat down, one of the men round the fire uttered some words of Italian and explained that he was a Brother from the monastery at Guča Gora, that his name was Brother Julian Pašalić, and that he was travelling on the business of his community. The rest were carriers.

Slowly assembling some sentences in Italian, Desfossés told him who he was. The friar, who had large bushy whiskers and thick eyebrows, under which a young face smiled as from under a mask, no sooner heard the words "Paris" and "Imperial French Consulate-General at Travnik" than he frowned and straightway fell silent. For a while the young man and the Franciscan regarded each other mistrustfully without speaking. The friar was young but stoutly built. He wore a thick black cloak, under which dimly appeared a blue tunic and a leather belt with a weapon in it. The young man gazed at him doubtfully and wondered, as in a dream, whether this could possibly be a churchman and a member of a monastic Order. The friar, on his side, looked keenly and in silence at the stranger, this tall, fresh-faced young man, who looked so handsome, cool and careless. He did not hide his disapproval when he heard what country he came from and what government had sent him.

To break the silence Desfossés asked the friar whether he found his service hard.

"Well, we manage to keep up respect for our holy Church in really hard conditions, while you in France, living in complete freedom, ruin and persecute it. It is a shame and a sin, sir!"

Desfossés knew from a conversation he had had at Split that the friars, and with them the whole Catholic community in these countries, were against the French occupation authorities as godless "Jacobins". Nevertheless he was surprised at talk of this kind and asked himself how an Imperial Consular officer ought to proceed in such an unforeseen situation. Looking into the friar's strange, sparkling eyes he bowed slightly.

"Your Reverence, perhaps, is not well informed about the affairs of my country."

"God grant it; but from what one hears and reads, there has been much ill work in hand and much wrong continues to be done to the Church and to her leaders and the faithful. And that never brought good to any man."

It was with an effort that the friar searched for his Italian phrases and his moderate and carefully chosen words did not at all correspond with the wrathful, almost savage expression on his face.

The brandy brought by the servants and the supper which began to sizzle on the fire beside them broke off this dialogue. In offering each other food and drink, the friar and the stranger were obliged to meet each other's glance from time to time and slowly warmed up, as two frozen and hungry men will under the influence of food and fire. The warmth and heavy drowsiness began to lay hold on the young man. The wind whistled in the high, black smoke-vent and sleet rattled on the roof like gravel. Inside the young man's head ideas began to swarm. "Well, my service has begun," he thought, "and so these are the difficulties and struggles one reads about in the memoirs of old Consuls in the East." He tried to visualize his position — snowed up somewhere in the middle of Bosnia, forced into an extraordinary dispute in a strange language with this peculiar friar. His eyes were beginning to droop and his brain worked with an effort, as in a confused dream in which a man is put to unfair and heavy tests. He knew only that he must not let his head drop, though it grew heavier every moment, and that he must not lower his eyes or leave the last word to his companion. He was alarmed but also proud that in this unexpected way and in this strange company he should have to take on himself his share of duty and try out both his own skill in refuting his opponent and the not very considerable knowledge of the Italian language which he had brought with him from college. At the same time he seemed at this very first step to feel almost physically how huge and implacable is the weight of every man's responsibility, allotted and flung like a noose round each single one of us.

His frozen hands were now burning. The smoke made him cough and stung his eyelids. He was tormented with sleep and the struggle to resist sleep, as if he were on guard, but he kept the Franciscan's face before him as a mark on which to concentrate. Through his drowsiness, as through some hot, milky

liquid which blurred his sight and filled his ears with murmurings, the young man looked at the strange friar and listened, as from a distance, to his broken sentences and his tags of Latin. His native gift of observation made him think: "This friar has inside him a great deal of accumulated energy and a great many quotations which he will never otherwise have the chance to bring out." But the friar went on saying how against the Church there could be no lasting success, nor would the French succeed, and how it had been said long ago, "*Quod custodit Christus, non tollit Gothus*" (What Christ guards, the Goth cannot destroy). Once again the young man explained in a mixture of French and Italian how Napoleonic France had shown its desire for religious peace and had given the Church its due place, redressing the errors and the violence of the Revolution. But under the influence of the food, the drink and the warmth everything thawed and grew peaceful. The friar's looks grew less harsh, though they remained severe, and they broke into youthful smiles. Looking at him, it seemed to Desfossés that this might be a sign that hostilities were over and a proof that the big, eternal questions could wait, that they could not in any case be solved in a Turkish khan at a casual meeting between a French consular officer and an "Illyrian" friar, and that consequently there was room for circumspection and tolerance, without prejudice to the honour and repute of the service. Fully at peace with himself and comfortably lulled by this thought, he yielded to weariness and sank into a deep sleep.

When they woke him, he needed some moments to recover his senses and realize where he was. The fire had burnt itself out. Most of the travellers were outside and their shouting about their horses and their goods penetrated the khan. He felt to see that his belt and wallet were in place and called his men, rather too sharply and too loudly. He was disturbed by an indefinite idea that he had forgotten or left something, but as soon as he found everything in order and his men ready beside the harnessed horses he calmed down. His friend the friar came out of the stable leading a good black horse. In dress and bearing he resembled one of the Croat frontiersmen and bandits in pictures. They both smiled at each other like old acquaintances and as if decisions had been taken on all the matters pending between them.

even the least, which threatened that regime and their own supremacy. They knew well that every foreigner coming to Bosnia did something to tread out a path between themselves and a hostile outer world and that a Consul with his special privileges and resources would open a wide highway up which no good — and possibly all manner of evil — might come to themselves, their interests and their religion.

Their indignation was great against Constantinople and the Ottoman Turks who allowed all this, and their anxiety was greater than they were willing to let Davna see. To his insistent questions they gave no clear replies, hiding their resentment at this invasion by foreigners but not hiding their disdain at his insistence. And when he tried to compel a merchant in the bazaar to tell him which Consul he favoured, the French or the Austrian, the man answered calmly that there was nothing to choose between them: "It's a choice of spotted or black. One's a dog and the other's his brother." Davna swallowed the reply. At least it was now crystal clear what people at large were thinking and feeling; only he did not know how to interpret and explain the matter to his Consul without offending him.

Besides all this, the French set themselves to confound the work of their adversary and to make his life a burden. Daville had long, though vainly, assured the Vizier what a danger the new Consul would be to Turkey and how much better it would be not to issue the *exequatur* and not to allow him to take up residence. The Vizier had looked straight in front of him and had not expressed his opinion. He knew that the *exequatur* for the Austrian Consul had already been given, but he let the Frenchman talk, while he considered only what loss or advantage he might derive from the struggle which was obviously beginning between the two Consuls.

Nevertheless, by new bribes and old connections Davna did succeed in delaying the despatch of the *exequatur*, and an unpleasant surprise awaited the Austrian Consul-General, Colonel von Mitterer, at Brod. The Sultan's decree and the consular *exequatur* had not reached the Austrian commander there, as promised. For a month von Mitterer sat at Brod, vainly dispatching couriers to Vienna and Travnik. At length he was informed that the *exequatur* had been sent to the Turkish



commander at Derventa, Nail Beg, and that he would hand it over to the Consul, so that he might arrive at Travnik with it. Thereupon von Mitterer left Brod with his interpreter, Nikola Rotta, and two servants. At Derventa a fresh surprise awaited him. The Turkish commander declared that he had nothing for the Consul, neither an *exequatur* nor any other instruction. He made him break his journey and stay at the fort of Derventa with his party — in a damp barrack-room, to be accurate, as the khan at Derventa had been burnt down shortly before. Although a man of experience who had grown old in working and battling with Turkish authorities, the Colonel was quite beside himself with indignation. The commander, a tough and surly Bosnian, expostulated with him over the coffee-cups.

“Wait a while, my dear sir! If it is true, as you say, that they have sent the decree and the *exequatur*, they will come without fail. Whatever is sent from the Sublime Porte is bound to arrive. You just wait here. You are no trouble to me.”

And even as he spoke, under the cushion on which he was sitting, wrapped in waxed linen and exquisitely composed, were the decree and the *exequatur* for Herr Joseph von Mitterer as Imperial and Royal Consul-General at Travnik.

In baffled despair the Colonel once again wrote urgent letters to Vienna in which he implored that the *exequatur* should be sought from Constantinople and that he should not be left in a situation like this which was harmful to the reputation of the country which had sent him and, above all, was undermining his work at Travnik. His letters ended, “Written at the fort of Derventa, in a dark cell, on the floor”. At the same time he engaged special couriers to go with messages to the Vizier begging him either to send the *exequatur* or to let him come to Travnik without it. Nail Beg detained the colonel’s messengers, took away their letters as suspect matter and placed them quietly under the cushion along with the *exequatur* and the decree.

In this manner the Colonel spent another fortnight at Derventa. During that time he was visited by a Jew from Travnik who offered his services, stating that he enjoyed opportunities of spying upon the French Consul. The Colonel, who mistrusted him and was used to working with spies, was unwilling to accept the dubious services of this man and confined himself to employing

him as a messenger and to sending him with a letter to the Vizier. The Jew took his money, carried the letter to Travnik, and handed it over to Davna, who had originally paid him to go to Derventa and pretend to place himself at the Austrian Consul's disposal. Daville saw from this letter in what a lamentable and ridiculous situation his opponent now found himself, and read with satisfaction the entreaties and impotent complaints which he had addressed to the Vizier. The letter was re-sealed and delivered at the Residency. The Vizier, taken by surprise, ordered an inquiry to be made to see what had become of the decree and *exequatur* which he had sent over a fortnight ago to the commander Nail Beg, with instructions to await the arrival of the new Consul at Derventa. The Vizier's head archivist went through the whole of his dusty archives two or three times in a vain attempt to establish where the missive could have stuck. The despatch-bearer who had taken the letter to Derventa and had returned demonstrated that he had duly handed the Vizier's correspondence over to the commander. Everything was in order, and yet the Austrian Consul was still sitting at Derventa waiting vainly and with impatience for his *exequatur*.

Meanwhile the matter had become as clear as daylight. Daville, through Davna and the Jew, had bribed the commander at Derventa to delay the handing-over of the *exequatur* as long as possible. The commander had agreed without difficulty to sit on his cushion for a fortnight with the decree and the *exequatur* under him and to reply daily to the Colonel with terse indifference that nothing had come for him. For this he received a gold thaler a day. Moreover, no one could do anything to the commander, since he had ceased for a long time past to answer any correspondence or complaints which were not to his liking, and never had any intention of going to Travnik himself.

But at last the matter was arranged. The Colonel received a letter from the Vizier informing him that the papers were being looked for and inviting him to take the road to Travnik at once, even without the *exequatur*. The Colonel joyfully left Derventa that very same day and started for Travnik; and the day after, the commander at Derventa sent the Consul's papers to the Vizier, with apologies for their having been mislaid. Thus there befell the Austrian Consul-General the same fate which almost

invariably befalls all foreigners going to Turkey to do business with the Turks. From the very first step such a one is persecuted, wearied and humiliated by the Turks, in part deliberately and consciously, but partly without deliberate intention, so that when the foreigner finally comes to the business which was the object of his visit his energy is already much diminished and his self-confidence considerably weakened.

As a matter of fact, even while he was waiting for his *exequatur* at Brod, von Mitterer had already begun to tamper secretly with the mail arriving for the French Consul from Ljubljana.

The entry of the Imperial and Royal Consul-General into Travnik proceeded in exactly the same manner as the entry of Daville. The only difference was that von Mitterer did not have to put up at a Jewish house, since the Catholic community was humming like a hive of bees and the best of the merchants' houses were offered for his acceptance. His reception by the Vizier was, according to Davna's reports, rather briefer and cooler than the reception of the French Consul; but his reception by the local Moslems was neither better nor worse. ("One's a dog and the other's his brother!"). The new Consul was escorted along the streets by the curses and menaces of women and children, he was spat upon from the windows, and the older men in the shops did not deign to honour him with a glance.

The new Austrian Consul visited first of all the two leading notables of the place and the Apostolic Visitor, who happened at the time to be staying at the Guča Gora monastery: he then called upon his French colleague. Davna's agents dogged his steps throughout these visits and reported everything they could discover or invent about them, adding in what was missing from their information; but it emerged quite clearly from it all that the Austrian Consul meant to attach to himself all those who were against the French Consul and that he was doing so skilfully and surely, without uttering a word against his colleague and his colleague's work, but listening to everything that others had to say. He had, even so, expressed sympathy with his colleague for having to represent a government which was the offspring of revolution and was, at bottom, irreligious. This had been his line with the Catholics. With the Turks, on the other hand, he had pitied Daville for having on his hands the thankless task

of preparing the gradual penetration of French troops from Dalmatia into Turkey, and thus bringing on the peaceful and beautiful province of Bosnia all the sufferings and dissensions which war and armies bring in their train.

It was a Tuesday, at noon precisely, when von Mitterer at length paid his call on Daville. Outside, the late autumn sun was shining, but in the big room on the ground floor of Daville's house it was fresh, almost cold. The two Consuls looked each other in the eye, trying not to seem forced in their conversation, and each of them endeavouring to say in the most natural manner possible the words he had long ago prepared for this occasion. Daville gave an account of his stay in Rome, and added, as it were incidentally, that his Sovereign had happily put an end to the Revolution and had restored not only the social order but the respect for religion in France. By chance — or so it seemed — he discovered on his table the Decree regarding the creation of a new Imperial nobility in France, and he expounded it fully to his visitor. Von Mitterer, on his side, following a well-established formula, set forth the wise policy of the Court of Vienna, which desired only peace and peaceful co-operation, but was obliged to maintain a powerful army, since Austria's vital strategic position in eastern Europe demanded it. Both Consuls were completely obsessed with the dignity of their calling and with the zeal which marks the first steps of beginners. This prevented their seeing the ridiculous side of the high tone and stately bearing of their encounter, but it did not prevent their scrutinizing and summing up each other.

To Daville von Mitterer appeared much older than he had imagined him from what he had heard. Everything about him — his dark green military uniform, his old-fashioned coiffure, and the waxed moustaches on the yellow face — seemed to him lifeless and elderly.

To von Mitterer, on the other hand, Daville seemed a lightweight and much too young. In his whole manner of speech, in his untended red moustaches and the natural waves of his fair hair above the high forehead, without powder or queue, in fact in everything about him, the Colonel detected revolutionary laxity and the unprepossessing extravagance of the free and fanciful.

Who knows when the two Consuls would have stopped expounding the high designs of their respective Courts, if they had not been interrupted by shrieks, whistles and a wild scampering in the yard?

In spite of the strictest prohibitions a large crowd of Christian and Jewish children had collected in the street, and hung over the fence waiting to see the Consul in his glittering uniform. As they could not keep quiet during the long wait, someone gave the youngest of the children a shove, and he slipped and tumbled off the fence down into the courtyard where Daville's attendants and von Mitterer's escort were waiting. The rest of the children scattered like sparrows. The Jewish child who had fallen into the yard began, after his first consternation, to screech as if he were being flayed alive, and his two brothers leaped about outside the closed gates weeping and calling out. The wailing and scampering to which all this gave rise turned the conversation of the two Consuls towards children and family matters. Both Consuls then became like soldiers who on the word of command pass from some excruciating exercise to "standing easy". It was in vain that one or the other from time to time, remembering his profession and duty, took up a haughty official pose. Their common discomfort and the similarity of their plight outweighed everything else. Despite all their attitudes, uniforms, orders and studied expressions, there burst forth like a flood their common discontent at the hard, undignified life to which they were both condemned. In vain Daville dwelt upon the extraordinary affability with which, from the start, he had been received at the Residency: in vain did von Mitterer emphasize the great, strong and secret sympathy which he enjoyed among the Catholics. In the tone of their voices, in the expression of their eyes, there kept breaking out the hidden sadness and the deep human understanding of two fellow-sufferers. And only the last lingering notions of duty and decorum prevented each of them from laying a hand on the other's shoulder and behaving for a while like two sensible private persons in distress. And so this first visit ended in conversations about childrens' illnesses and food and, in general, about the hard conditions in which they had to live at Travnik.

That same day, at the same time, both Consuls sat long over sheets of thick draft paper, drawing up long rows of official

reports on their first sight of their *vis-à-vis*. In these the first visit wore quite another look. Here, on paper, it became a bloodless duel between two prodigies of acumen, subtlety and official zeal. Each attributed to his opponent powers and qualities which corresponded completely with the high opinion he held of himself and his own task. Only in the Frenchman's report it was the Austrian who in the end, morally speaking, bit the dust, while in the Austrian's report it was the Frenchman who was left in speechless confusion at the dignified and super-subtle exposition of the Imperial and Royal Consul-General.

Each, however, laid heavy stress on the fact that his opponent was much depressed by the exceptionally hard conditions in which a civilized European with a family was forced to live in this wild and mountainous country. And each, of course, omitted to mention his own depression.

Thus the two Consuls enjoyed that day a double solace and a double satisfaction. They had conversed and condoled as men, in so far as that was possible at a first meeting, and each had portrayed the other in the most unflattering colours, which in effect meant giving a more favourable portrait of himself. Thereby each of them had satisfied two inner necessities, both vain and both contradictory, but at the same time equally human and equally understandable; and that was something in this strange life in which satisfactions of any kind, whether real or imaginary, were rare for both of them and became still rarer.

From this time on, then, the two Consuls lived on the two opposite sides of Travnik with their families and their associates — one house over against the other. The two men had been from the very first appointed and dispatched as adversaries to each other, to deceive and thwart each other, to advance the interests of their own Court and country among the authorities and the people at large, and to damage and impair as far as they could those of their own opponent. This they did, as we have already seen and shall see further, each to the best of his capacity and according to his own temperament, upbringing and opportunities. Often they fought bitterly and without regard, forgetting everything else and giving themselves up entirely to the instincts of battle and survival, like two cocks with their blood up, loosed by unseen

hands into this cramped and bewitched arena. Every success was a failure of the other and every failure of the other a little triumph. Such blows as they were dealt they concealed or made light of, even to themselves; those they dealt to their adversary they magnified and stressed in their reports to Vienna or Paris. Generally speaking, the enemy Consul and his work were painted in these reports only in the darkest of colours, and these two worried fathers of families, peaceful citizens well on in years, appeared at times as creatures of terror and blood, as ravening lions or dark intriguers. This at least was the portrait they gave of each other, each blinded by his own dreary lot and confused by the strange environment into which they had both been thrown and in which both rapidly lost all sense of proportion and all feeling for reality.

It would be a long task, and beside the point, to recount each of the successive storms in the consular teacup, all their struggles and all their devices, many of which were laughable and some deplorable, while most were needless and pointless. Many of them we cannot in any case avoid mentioning in the course of our story. The Consuls fought for influence with the Vizier and his senior assistants, they bought the officers in frontier posts and egged them on to plunder and raid in their enemy's territories. The Frenchman launched his hirelings northward across the Austrian frontier; the Austrian launched his southward into Dalmatia under French occupation. Through their agents each spread false rumours among the population and countered those of his opponent. In short, they poured abuse on each other and called each other names like two wrangling women. They seized each other's messengers, opened each other's letters, filched or suborned each other's servants. If one might believe what they said about each other, they even seem to have gone so far as to poison each other, or at least to have attempted to do so.

Yet at the same time there was a great deal, after all, which brought the two consular opponents closer together and linked them with each other, since here in fact were two grown men, burdened with families, each with his scheme of life and his plans, cares and frustrations, obliged to struggle and endure in this alien, unfriendly country, each grimly holding on and imitating in their own movements the great gestures of their distant, unseen

and often incomprehensible masters. A hard life and an evil destiny brought them close to each other, and if there were two people in the world who might have been able to understand, and even to help, each other, it was these two Consuls who in fact were spending their strength, their days and often their nights in putting obstacles in each other's paths and making each other's lives as unpleasant as possible. In reality, it was only the aims of their official work which differed; all their other interests were identical or much alike. They fought according to the same rules, with the same weapons, with the same varying success. In addition to their duel with each other, both had to sustain a daily struggle with the slow and unreliable Turkish authorities and with the unbelievably malicious and recalcitrant local Moslems. Both had their own family cares and the same disputes with their own higher authorities, who never sent instructions in time, with their respective Ministries, which were always refusing to sanction grants, and with the frontier officials who were for ever making mistakes or overlooking them. Most of all, both had to live in the same oriental township, without society or friends, without comfort of any sort, often without the barest necessities, among wild mountains and primitive peoples, in a continuous battle with mistrust, inexactitude, dirt, sickness and troubles of every kind. In short, they had to live in an atmosphere which begins by exhausting a westerner, then makes him morbidly irritable and tiresome to himself and others, and at last, in the course of years, completely transforms and absorbs him and buries him in a dull apathy long before his death.

It was consequently with delight that the two Consuls drew together as soon as a change in the situation and better political relations between their two countries allowed them to do so. In these moments of truce and repose they looked at each other in confusion and embarrassment, like men awakened out of a dream, searching in themselves for different, more personal, feelings towards their adversary and wondering how far they might dare to give them rein. They frequented one another's company, cheered each other up, gave presents and wrote notes to each other, with such cordiality and friendliness as is only possible to men who have injured each other and are at the same time firmly linked by a common evil destiny and have been thrown in each other's way.



But as soon as this brief lull began to come to an end and relations between Napoleon and the Court of Vienna began to be strained, the Consuls likewise began to space out their visits and ration their amiable attentions, until a rupture of relations or war completely sundered them and set them at variance. Then both the weary men began their struggle over again, following like two obedient puppets on long strings the motions of the greater, remoter struggle, the ultimate objects of which were unknown to them and which filled them both to the bottom of their souls with the same feelings of terror and insecurity at its vast scope and cruelty. Even so, that firm, invisible bond never ceased to link the two Consuls, "the two exiles" as they termed themselves in their letters to each other. Neither they nor their families ever met or saw each other; on the contrary, they proceeded to work against each other with every means and every subterfuge. At night, when Travnik was already sunk deep in darkness, a couple of windows in the two Consulates were all that could be seen alight. The two Consuls were sitting up over their papers, reading reports from their agents, writing despatches. It would often happen then that Daville or von Mitterer, leaving his labours for a moment, would go to the window and look at the lonely light on the hillside opposite, by which his neighbour and adversary was forging unknown traps and plots, trying to undermine his colleague on the far side of the river and to confound all his calculations.

The huddled town no longer lay between them, only emptiness, silence and the dark. Their windows gazed and glittered at each other, like the eyes of men in a duel. But hidden behind a curtain, one of the Consuls, or both at once, stared into the darkness at the feeble ray of his opponent's light and they thought of each other with a deep and penetrant understanding and with a genuine compassion. Then they would tear themselves away and turn back to their work by the low-burning candles and each would continue writing his report, in which there was not a trace of what they had felt such a short while before. They attacked and disparaged each other with that false, superior tone officials use towards the whole world when they are writing their Ministry a confidential report which they know will never be read by the persons to whom it refers.

Just as only their hard and cheerless fate had appointed that those two men should meet in this Bosnian valley during these tormented years of universal war, so the life of the Austrian Consul-General, Joseph von Mitterer, had been made up of hardships, among which his coming to Travnik had not been the least.

He was a swarthy man, with a sallow complexion, waxed black moustaches and a stiff carriage, slow in speech, reserved in manner; everything about him was stiff, angular, clean and neat, but unassuming and strictly "regulation", as if the whole figure, man and uniform, had just been issued by some Imperial and Royal quartermaster's store on some urgent demand for the fitting out of a stock colonel. Only his round brown eyes, with their perpetually red and inflamed eyelids, gave some impression of a mute kindness of heart and of a sensibility for ever kept concealed. They were the muddy eyes of a man who suffers from liver, the tired eyes of an officer who has endured long service on the frontier and long slavery in an office, eyes which had spent themselves in wakeful watching along the ever threatened frontier of the Empire, sad and inexpressive eyes which had seen much evil in the course of this work and had seen that there were limits to man's capacity, man's freedom and man's humanity to his fellow men.

He had been born fifty years before at Osijek, where his father had been an officer in a Slavonian hussar regiment. He had been sent to a cadet school and had emerged as an Ensign of foot. On becoming a lieutenant, he had been posted as Intelligence Officer to Semlin, where except for a few brief intervals he had spent about twenty years, years of hardship filled with wars against the Turks and against Serb insurgents. During that time he had not only interrogated agents, assembled facts, kept up contacts and submitted reports, but had himself more than once crossed into Serbia, often disguised as a peasant or a monk, and in the hardest of conditions had explored the strength of the Turks, sketched their fortified places and their more important positions or had sounded the temper of the people. In this work, which

wears a man out before his time, von Mitterer had had success; and as often happens in life, in his case too it was success that broke his neck. After several years of his work they were so pleased with his reports at Vienna that he was summoned there in person and received the rank of Captain and a reward of a hundred ducats. This success inspired the young officer with the daring hope that he might climb out of the monotonous, laborious round in which all his forbears had dragged their heavy load before him.

As an officer from the frontier zone, with an award of a hundred ducats and a high commendation in his pocket and as a man who had now passed his thirtieth year, his aspirations knew no bounds, but particularly he aspired to a more peaceful, more attractive and socially more distinguished way of life. He had beheld the embodiment of such a life in a young Viennese lady. She was the daughter of an officer in the Judge Advocate-General's department, a Germanized Pole, and of an unpropertied Hungarian baroness. This pretty and rather too lively and romantic young person, Anna Maria, was bestowed by her parents without hesitation, indeed with rather excessive ease and speed, on this obscure but worthy frontier officer from the fringes of the Empire. It was as if Fate had only needed to hang this woman round his neck in order to bind him permanently and completely to the dead round of subordinate duties from which he had wished to escape at all costs. This marriage which was to have opened the door for him to a higher and more agreeable life, in fact closed it and tied him fast for ever, taking from him that tranquillity and peace which are the only treasure and the greatest distinction of humble lives and undistinguished men.

The Information Officer who had "had a success" quickly discovered that there is something which no one can sense or foresee, namely the moods and vagaries of a restless, feckless woman. This "unhappy Polish-Hungarian-Viennese crossbreed", as the commander of the Semlin garrison called Frau von Mitterer, suffered from an excess of imagination and from a morbid, irresistible and insatiable need for excitement. Frau von Mitterer became excited over music, Nature, sentimental charity, old pictures, new ideas, Napoleon, or anything else outside herself and her own circle, anything which was opposed to her ordinary

life, her own good name or her husband's reputation. This need for excitement in her life was very often connected with passing and capricious love affairs. As a result of some fatal and irresistible craving, this hot-headed, physically frigid woman, from time to time developed a passion for young men, usually younger than herself, in the perpetual belief that in the particular young man in question, whom she felt to be endowed with a strong personality and a stout heart full of the purest feelings, she had found the champion of her dreams and a kindred soul. And by this same fatality, they always turned out to be callous and clever young men who did in reality desire her, but only briefly, transitorily, and with but one end in view, as they might have desired any other woman who crossed their path and offered no resistance. After her initial burst of enthusiasm, and at the first physical touch, when the whole difference between her airy and insubstantial passion and the young man's true intentions had unmistakably revealed itself, Anna Maria would collapse in despair and disillusion. "Love" turned into a hatred and loathing of her former idol, of herself, and of love and life in general. By degrees she recovered, and sought and found some other object on which to feed her enthusiasms and indignations, thus satisfying her inner need for crises and renunciations. And so it went on until the next new opportunity, when it began all over again.

Von Mitterer had tried many times to expose his wife's delusions to her, to bring her to reason and protect her, but it had all been of no use. His 'sick child', who was by now well on in years, fell, periodically and with the helpless regularity of an epileptic, into new crises in the course of her search for true love. The colonel knew it all by heart, both the earliest symptoms and the course of each of his wife's 'insanities', and foresaw long in advance the moment when she would fling herself about his neck in tears of disillusion, crying that all desired her and nobody loved her.

How could such a marriage continue to hold out? How this conscientious, sober man managed to endure all this and why he forgave it all in advance, is something that no one will ever be able to understand. It will remain one of those incomprehensible secrets which so often pitilessly divide and indissolubly unite two human beings.

In their very first year Anna Maria had already once returned to her parents in Vienna, vowing that she had a mortal loathing of physical love and that she could not allow her husband any rights in this respect. By yielding on every point, the Captain managed to convert her and take her back. Later, a daughter was born to them; but it was a brief consolation. Two years after it all began again. The Captain bowed his head and plunged into the heavy duties of the Semlin quarantine station and his intelligence work, reconciled to the fact that he had to live with a fiery serpent to which everything had to be sacrificed, and which in return requited him only with new discontents and new disquiets.

Like all crazy, flighty women, the handsome, wayward, scatterbrained Frau von Mitterer did what she pleased without ever knowing what she really wanted. She rushed heedlessly into her passing enthusiasms and as quickly returned from them in disenchantment. It is impossible to say which was harder for von Mitterer to bear or more painful for him to watch, her transports or her disillusionments. The Captain endured both with a martyr's serenity. The truth was that he loved constantly and unreservedly, as one might love a child that was ill, this woman whom destiny had inflicted on him as an unmerited punishment. Everything that had to do with her was dear to him, and exceptional and a thing apart. Everything about her, within her and around her, down to the lifeless properties which belonged to her, impressed themselves upon him as things from a higher, fairer world, worthy of worship and justifying every sacrifice. He suffered from her starts and lapses, they filled him with shame before others and with anguish in himself, but at the same time he trembled at the mere thought that this enchanting woman might leave him or might do violence to herself and vanish from his house or from this world. He rose in the service, his daughter grew up, a frail, serious, sensitive girl, and Frau von Mitterer quested around with undiminished energy, seeking from life all that life can never give, transforming everything into an object of enthusiasm or indignation and tormenting equally both herself and all about her. The untamable, irrational madness which inhabited the woman changed direction and form as the years went by but it showed no signs of weakening or subsiding.

When von Mitterer was somewhat unexpectedly appointed Consul-General at Travnik, Anna Maria, who just at that moment happened to be passing through one of her great disenchantments, began at first to rage and weep, declaring that she would not leave the semi-oriental market town where she had languished up till then and go to "nothing more or less than a Turkish graveyard" and that she would not let her child go "to Asia" either. The Colonel soothed his wife and pointed out that the new post meant an important transfer and a big step in his career, that it might indeed be a little uncomfortable, but that on his new pay he would be able to assure the child's future. Finally he proposed that if she absolutely refused to go, she should remain with the child at Vienna. Anna Maria at first insisted on this solution but quickly changed her mind and steeled herself to the sacrifice. The Colonel was clearly not fated to enjoy in Bosnia a few more peaceful months of that paradise which was a synonym for the absence of his wife.

As soon as von Mitterer had found a house and arranged it as best he could, the Frau Konsul arrived with their daughter. It was obvious at first glance that she was a woman who needed a good deal of attention from the world. She was still as handsome and looked as young as ever, though already a little too made up. Her whole appearance — the flawless white of her skin, the exceptional brilliance of her eyes, now greenish, now a dark gold as clear as the waters of the Lašva, the colour and the arrangement of her hair, her carriage, her movements and her imperious manner of speech — all brought to Travnik for the first time something of the glamour and style which the people of Travnik ascribed in their imaginations to foreign Consuls.

Beside Frau von Mitterer walked her daughter Agatha, a girl of thirteen totally unlike her mother. Lanky and silent, prematurely serious and oversensitive, with thin, compressed lips and her father's look of rigidity, she walked at her mother's side like a perpetual dumb reproof, not disclosing her own feelings in any way and outwardly insensitive to everything around her. In reality the child was from the first scared and perplexed by her mother's fits of temperament and by all that she felt to be going on between her father and mother; she loved only her father and that with a strengthless, passive love. She was one

of those young girls who are smallboned and undersized but who develop very early and become grown women in miniature, so that they constantly surprise and mislead, displaying sometimes a completely childish outlook and sometimes an unexpected aspect of maturity. The living opposite of her mother in everything, the girl was unmusical and cared only for solitude and reading.

Immediately after her arrival, Frau von Mitterer threw herself with all her energy into the arrangement of the house and garden. Furniture was brought from Vienna, workmen were brought from Slavonski Brod. Everything was changed round, moved and reversed. (In the French Consulate they said, in the course of their incessant conversations about "the people across the river" that "Madame von Mitterer was building a new Schönbrunn". And Frau von Mitterer, on her side, who had a liking for the French language and cherished what she considered to be a French wit, was not slow to reply. Speaking critically of Madame Daville's household fittings, among which, as we have seen, figured a number of skilfully concealed and covered chests, she declared that Madame Daville had furnished her house in the style of "Louis Caisse"). The garden was shut off by a high fence from the busy, muddy courtyard of the market hostel and its stables. The whole of Hafizadić's oldfashioned house was remodelled after plans of the Frau Konsul, plans of which no one could see the end or intention but which corresponded, or were meant to correspond, to certain lofty ideas of perfection, brilliance and distinction which were not clear even to herself.

As is often the case with women of this kind, the passing years revealed new peculiarities. Anna Maria now began to suffer from a craze for exaggerated cleanliness; but even more than her own suffering was that which she inflicted on all about her. To her nothing was ever sufficiently fresh and scrubbed and no one was sufficiently clean. With all the ardour of which she was capable she dashed into the fight against dirt and disorder. She changed the servants, she terrorized the staff, she darted, dusted and wore herself out in the struggle with mud, dust, muddle and the strange habits of her new home. Then there came days when Anna Maria, suddenly discouraged lost faith in the issue of her fight and collapsed. Wringing her hands in despair, she felt the dirt and disorder of this eastern country closing in from every side, striking

upwards from the earth and dropping from the air, forcing a way through doors and windows and into every cranny, and, gradually but irresistibly, mastering the house and everything in it, things, people, livestock and all. It seemed to her that, since she came to this wilderness, even her own personal belongings had begun to exude a certain stickiness and dirt and were slowly being covered with a thin film of uncleanness, against which no manner of dusting or rubbing was of any avail. She very often came back from her short walks quivering with still greater discouragement, having encountered in her first few steps some lame or mangy dog, a scared and pitiful sight, or having come upon a pack of street curs as they were tearing apart a pile of sheep's guts and scattering the maggots over the street. She went riding outside the town and tried, from her tall mount, not to look at what was immediately around her. But even that did not help.

One day, after a brief spring shower, she rode out in this way with an escort along the high road. At the exit from the town they met a beggar. The half-witted, diseased man, barefoot and in rags, ducked before the lordly riders and clambered up on to the path which ran on a bank above the road and parallel with it. His feet, consequently, were on a level with the face of the woman on horseback. For a mere instant her field of vision was filled with a glimpse of trampled clay and a pair of huge, bare, muddy feet, the feet of a workman, old before his time, who could work no longer. She only glanced at them for a moment but for long after her sight was haunted by those inhuman feet, square, shapeless, lumpy, unspeakably deformed by long tramping and a life of hardship, wrinkled like pine bark, yellow and black, swollen and crooked, heavy stumbling feet which could scarcely bear themselves up and halted lamely and uncertainly, measuring perhaps the last steps they would ever take.

"Ah well, a hundred suns and a thousand springs could do nothing to help those feet", thought Anna Maria suddenly, in that one moment, "No care, no food or medicine can mend them or alter them. Whatever was born or blossomed on earth, those feet could only grow yellower, uglier and more horrible". This thought now went with her continually everywhere; this morbid and monstrous vision would not leave her for days to



come. Whatever she started to do or think, she was checked and frozen at the very outset by the idea, "*That still goes on.*"

Thus Frau von Mitterer tortured herself and her anguish was still further increased by the morbid and humiliating knowledge that nobody understood her feeling of repulsion or shared her longing for perfection and cleanness. In addition to this, or maybe for this very reason, she felt a constant need to talk about it and complained to everybody of the revolting state of the town and the slackness of the servants, although she saw that not a single person managed to understand her, still less to help.

The priest from Dolac, the stout, coarse Brother Ivo Janović, listened politely and distractedly to this complaint and lamentation of hers and gave her some superficial, careless words of comfort, as one might console a child, saying whatever came into his head and declaring that man must bear calmly and humbly whatever comes his way and that after all even dust and dirt were also God's gifts. For the rest, it had been said long ago: "*Castis omnia casta*" — that is, "to the pure all things are pure", the priest translated, with the genial indifference which is native to all stout people and all old monks.

Thereafter, Frau von Mitterer, scared and indignant at all about her, remained for days at home, avoiding all contact with people and all sight of the town. She wore gloves all day long and sat in an armchair with a white cover which was frequently changed, allowing no one to approach when they addressed her or to speak at close quarters. Yet in spite of all this she was haunted by the feeling that she was submerged in dirt, dust and bad smells, and whenever this agony became more than she could bear, which was often, she would get up and rush in to her husband, interrupting him in his work, reproaching him bitterly for having brought her there and demanding through her tears that they should leave this dirty, wretched country at once. All this was repeated over and over again until force of habit began to have its effect or until this particular mania was succeeded by another.

In the Consulate itself the principal figure after the Consul-General was the interpreter and Chancery servant Nikola Rotta. He had previously served in the quarantine station at Semlin and von Mitterer had brought him with him to Travnik. He was

a little, hunchbacked man, though without any visibly projecting deformity, with a powerful chest and a large head, which was tilted back and sunk between hunched shoulders and was distinguished by a wide mouth, bright eyes and grizzled hair with a natural curl. His legs and feet were short and thin, encased either in low boots with turnover tops or in silk stockings ending in flat-heeled slippers with large gilt buckles. Unlike his chief, von Mitterer, who was a mild, approachable man with a certain melancholy gentleness in his manner, von Mitterer's aide was stiff and testy with Turks and Christians alike. His sardonic silence was no less harsh, disagreeable and insolent than his speech. Though small and deformed, he nevertheless contrived to look down on people who were half as tall again as himself. From that backward leaning head between the hunched shoulders his dark eyes, with their heavy eyelids falling deeply over them, looked out with cutting indifference, a sort of contemptuous fatigue, as if he could just see his interlocutor somewhere in the distance a long way below him. But when he appeared before persons of rank and influence (and he was very well aware who did and who did not answer to this description and who merely appeared to do so) and when he was translating their conversations, his eyes directed their gaze to the ground and became at once bold, sly and remote.

Rotta spoke several languages: in Travnik the general reckoning was that he knew ten. But his highest skill lay not so much in what he said as in his ability to silence his opponent. He had a habit of throwing back his head, scanning his opposite rather distantly through half-closed eyelids, and saying in a dry, brisk tone: "And so, what then? What then?"

At the sound of this meaningless phrase uttered in Rotta's particular manner even the boldest were often put out and the most brilliant arguments and proofs, the most legitimate demands somehow drooped and collapsed. Only in Cesare Davna did Rotta find an adversary and an opposite worthy of his steel. Ever since Davna, even before their arrival at Travnik, had so cleverly laid that little plot with the governor of Derventa in the matter of the decree and the *exequatur* and had kept them sitting a fortnight in the town like the merest tramps, he had been in Rotta's eyes an antagonist of a class not to be taken lightly. And Davna on his side did not underrate Rotta, about whom

he had gathered a few facts from a merchant of Belgrade. The two of them dealt with each other differently from the rest of the world. In their conversations with each other they nearly always adopted a light and humorous tone which was meant to convey a nonchalant ease but which in fact concealed a strained attention and an unacknowledged fear. They sniffed round each other like two animals, and scrutinized each other hard like a couple of knaves: both knew well that they were knaves but they did not know exactly each other's tricks and methods. These conversations, which generally began in French and were polite in their tone and official in their language, sometimes turned into lusty brawls in the rough and corrupt Venetian dialect which is spoken on all the shores of the Mediterranean. Then both interpreters threw off their courtly masks and vied with each other in the piling on of abuse after the manner of the Levant, completely forgetting their manners and station and employing the most shameless expressions, accompanied by indescribable gestures and grimaces.

"Bless me, reverend father, do, bless the humble servant of holy Mother Church," would be Davna's ironical prayer to Rotta, making mock of the Austrian's good relations with the friars.

"May the Jacobin devil bless you from hell", Rotta would reply, as calmly as if he were playing a part he had learnt.

"You'd lick the very altars in the friary."

"You'd be glad enough to lick even what no one ever thinks of licking, if the Brothers wanted you to. But they don't. They don't want anything from you Frenchmen. I hear you're opening a synagogue in one wing of the French Consulate".

"No such thing. What should we want with a synagogue? Far better go to church at Dolac and see His Excellency the Imperial and Royal Consul-General and his respected interpreter serving Brother Ivo at mass."

"Why not? I'm equal to that too."

"I know, I know. There's nothing you won't do. But there's only one thing you can't do, and that's grow any taller."

"You're quite right. You see I can't," said the hunchback, without a quiver, "but believe me I've stopped worrying about that ever since I saw you the size you are, and still more when

I think what a length you'll be when you're stretched out for your funeral. They'll be hard put to it to find a box big enough for such a stiff."

"Ah well, I hope to see you out. I'd spare neither money nor pains to find you the tidiest little box", and Davna indicated with his hands a span's length.

"Oh no, no. I've no idea of dying. And why *should* I die if you're not my doctor?"

"Plague take you, be your doctor who he may."

"A colleague of yours, I know. Only plague kills you without a fee — though I grant you're a more certain killer. There have been a few who have come through the plague and lived, but none through your hands."

And so they went on until both burst out laughing, as they exchanged a bold, suggestive glance. These conversations always took place unwitnessed, they acted as a kind of exercise and gymnastic for the two interpreters. The end of the conversation was always in French, polite and ceremonious. And seeing how they saluted each other on parting, with a low sweep of the hat, the people of Travnik drew all sorts of conclusions from this long and friendly conversation between officials of the two Christian powers.

With everyone else in Travnik, Rotta was uniformly brusque, saturnine, mistrustful, businesslike and terse. By birth a Triestine, Rotta was the twelfth child of a poor shoemaker, called Giovanni Scarparotta who had died of drink. This twelfth child was thin, ugly, deformed and in the first months of his life so weak that they were constantly lighting the funeral candles for him and once even swaddled and prepared him for burial. But when this pale, hunchbacked little boy went to school he showed himself the most intelligent of the family and capable of becoming something higher and better than his father and grandfather had been before him; and while all the other brothers, big healthy boys, went to sea, into other work, or into those indefinite occupations by which people in Trieste manage to live as if they were real work, the young hunchback was taken into employ in the office of a shipping company.

He was a sickly, silent lad, with large eyes and a sensitive mouth in a pale face. He distributed mail and cut pens, and saw

for the first time what a gentleman's life was like, in large, clean rooms, the life of well-bred folk in good settled circumstances, where people talked quietly and treated each other courteously and food and clothing and all the other daily needs were never in question but were matters of course, and where all thoughts and endeavours were directed beyond these, towards other, remoter and higher aims. The boy inwardly compared this way of life, at which he could only peep by day, while he attended the office, with the crowding, dirt, and poverty of his father's house, with its brawls, and spitefulness and grossness both within the family and with the neighbours; and he suffered beyond measure from this comparison. Now, when he had become aware that this other way of life existed, he could no longer abide the mean poverty in which he had been born and in which he was forced to lead his life; and one night, before daybreak, after long lying awake in travail with these thoughts, the boy got up from the pile of rags on which he slept and which filled him with unbearable loathing and kneeling down, with the tears running down his face, he swore, he knew not to whom or what, that either he would find a way out of the life which his family lived or else he would cease to live at all. Here beside him his many brothers, older and younger, were sleeping sound — hard-driven apprentices or swarthy, unwashed loafers, wrapped in the same rags as himself. He felt them not as brothers and his own kin, but as loathsome slaves, among whom he could not bear to stay and from whom he had to escape as quickly as he could, for ever and at any price.

From that day the young hunchback set his face wholly towards that better and higher life on the other side. He worked with devotion and obedience and fulfilled every wish of his employers; he learnt, observed and listened, and with the desperation of a man buried alive he tried to discover the entry to that easier, gentler life and how it might be opened. A longing, unconscious but profound, to enter that life and maintain himself in it, drew him forward, while from behind he was driven on with the same degree of force by a raging hatred of that other terrible life at home and by an unconquerable disgust at everything connected with it.

Such energy and such zeal could not remain unnoticed and unrewarded. The boy advanced by degrees to clerical work. He

was entrusted with minor commissions on board ship and with the local authorities. He showed himself discreet, indefatigable, possessing a great gift for the learning of languages and a faultless handwriting. His superiors marked him. He was given an opportunity to learn German. His pay was raised. He began to take French lessons from a royalist *émigré*. This old gentleman, who was paralyzed and was obliged to maintain himself by giving lessons, had once belonged to good and cultivated Parisian society. Young Nikola Scarparotta got from him a good deal of knowledge not only of the language but also of geography, history and, in general, what the old man called "knowledge of the world".

When he had arrived thus far, young Scarparotta quite naturally and coolly left his parents' house in the poor quarter and rented himself a modest but clean furnished room kept by a widow. This signified the taking of the first firm step in that better world he had to conquer.

In time he grew to be indispensable in the Company's offices, on the arrival of ships, and in dealing with foreigners. He could express himself with ease and rapidity in five languages; he knew down to the last detail the names of all the various authorities in the Empire and the titles of their officers. He remembered everything other people found it troublesome to remember but needed every minute of the day; and with it all he remained no less quiet and discreet, with no personal needs or desires, always at call and never in the way.

In was for these qualities that he was noted by the garrison commander, Major Kalcher, for whom the young hunchback had performed a number of services and to whom he had given a great deal of useful information regarding foreigners who came or left in the Company's ships. And when the Major was transferred to Semlin, he invited the young man, after a few months' delay, to enter the service of the Semlin garrison command as interpreter and intelligence agent. The shoemaker's son, who had escaped from one world and seized a position for himself in another, saw this invitation both an omen and a welcome chance of physical removal from his native squalor, which still lived on in Trieste only a few streets away from him.

It this way the young man came to Semlin, and here he at once distinguished himself by his devotion and skill. He crossed

over to Belgrade on confidential business, he listened to foreigners talking in the quarantine station — he had lately learnt both Greek and Spanish. And it was here that the son of the Triestine cobbler, wishing to wipe out all trace of his origin, discarded the "Scarpa" and called himself simply "Rotta"; indeed at one time he went so far as to write "De Rotta". It was here too that he married a Levantine girl, the daughter of a Constantinople export merchant, who had come to visit relations at Semlin. Her father had been born at Stamboul but was by origin a Dalmatian; her mother was a Greek.

The girl was pretty, quiet, plump, and something of an heiress. It seemed to Rotta that the acquisition of such a wife was the final step required to secure him for ever in a finer, easier world and that it set the crown on a struggle which had lasted many years and had been full of pain and sacrifice.

Meanwhile, just at this valley of decision in his life, Rotta began to see that this was not the long dreamt of end of his journey or the long awaited reward. Life revealed itself to this already exhausted man as an infinite recession, with nothing permanent or secure about it, a malicious maze of innumerable mirrors, in which new and further perspectives were for ever opening up, each probably as deceptive as the rest. His wife turned out to be unreliable, lazy, sickly and extravagant — a nuisance in every way. If Rotta had not so abruptly and totally severed every link with the life of his childhood, he might have remembered a Mediterranean proverb which as a boy he had many times heard on his parents' lips: "*Chi vuol fare la sua rovina, prende la moglie levantina*" — "If you want to wreck your life, marry a Levantine wife". The work at Semlin was neither as orderly nor as innocent as that at Trieste. He was entrusted with dangerous and unpleasant tasks which strained his nerves and occupied his nights as well as his days, depriving him of sleep. This motley, rough and tricky society which swarmed on the great crossroad from Belgrade to Semlin, from Semlin to Belgrade, and up and down the Danube, was complex, untrustworthy, hard to deal with, a tangle of enmities, unexpected quarrels and secret revenges. Rotta had to use the same methods in order to survive. Little by little he acquired that dry, brusque tone which is common to kavasses and interpreters in the Near

East and is no more than the common expression of an inward desolation, of a lost faith in men and an absence of all illusions.

After a second daughter had died in the very first months after birth, his marriage foundered in sullenness and hate. Wrangles began which it took very little time to transform into savage quarrels. These attained a full measure of ugliness and brutality, not a degree behind those which Rotta remembered from his childhood. Finally his wife left him, without recrimination and without public scandal, and went back to Constantinople, which, in the view of them both, she never should have left.

It then broke in upon Rotta that it was not enough for a sensitive, hunchbacked boy to make vows and cry over his poverty in the night, it was not enough for him to toil and serve for twenty years of persistent, arduous work, if he wished to pass from one way of life in which he was born to another which he had glimpsed by chance and to which his heart drew him on. What was still worse, this 'new' world did not in fact exist as something separate, apart and immutable which could be attained and made one's own once for all, as it had seemed to him during those first years. Similarly, that 'old' world of need and degradation from which he had escaped only at the cost of the most strenuous efforts, was not to be so easily and simply shaken off as he had shaken off his brothers and sisters and the rags of his father's house; it accompanied a man invisibly and fatefully all through his apparent changes and triumphs.

And so at thirty Rotta already felt himself betrayed and worn out, like a man who has overstrained his powers and has had no reward for his services. Abstract reasoning was not in his line but he could not help reflecting on his fate and he could not help feeling lonely and disillusioned. As a refuge from these thoughts and from himself he threw himself entirely into the harsh and murky life of the frontier and the quarantine station where a man grows coarse beyond all measure and old before his time. He became greedy for money and rewards, insistent on his position in the service, touchy in the extreme, quick to quarrel, suspicious, rough, superstitious and inwardly afraid. His vanity seemed to the outside world excessive and overdone, since he was proud not only of what he had achieved but of all the unseen effort and cost which had gone to the achievement.



Yet even this vanity did not remain constant, for as the years go by we are deserted even by those pleasures which produce our vices. Having lost faith in the idea of further striving along the path on which he had toiled for so long and which had not fulfilled his expectations, Rotta let himself drift downstream, craving only for a life without pain or poverty, a life of less work and fewer headaches, of ever growing personal pleasures, certainties and rewards. Like Davna, the interpreter at the French Consulate, he had lived side by side with the Turks, and had grown used to their customs and methods and to that inhuman life whose course consisted of constant association and constant hatred, rivalry and competition with Turks, Christians of all faiths, and travellers of every variety.

Prematurely worn, he was now a grey-headed, morose and solitary hypochondriac, full of little fads and official pedantries. He suffered from imaginary illnesses, was afraid of spells and evil omens, and hated the Church and everything connected with it. He felt alone, he recalled with loathing his wife and his life with her and shuddered at the thought of that dirty, rowdy poverty which he had once left behind him at Trieste: he even disliked to hear the name of his family mentioned. He acquired a passion for economy and became a terrible hoarder. He had the feeling that in this way he might by degrees repair everything that was warped or contrary in his life and that money was the only thing left which might, up to a certain point, raise up, save and defend a man.

He was fond of rich food and good drink but had a horror of being poisoned as he ate, and besides being terrified of the expense, he was afraid that he might speak out in his cups and give something away. This unreasoning fear of poison or intoxication came upon him more and more, although he tried to free himself from this obsession and protect himself against it. The obsession itself frightened him no less and indeed more than the actual possibility of poisoning.

In his younger days he had spent much on clothes and had found some satisfaction in astonishing the world with the stiffness and whiteness of his shirts and of the lace of his ruffles and cuffs, with the brilliance and number of his silk handkerchiefs, and the impeccable shine of his shoes. Now he had completely given up all this as well. The passion for thrift had suppressed every other feeling in him.

In his own eyes his hard-gathered and jealously guarded wealth became merely an insurance against poverty. It was quite true, as had been said of him, that he had once as a young dandy had a hundred and one shirts and thirty pairs of shoes. Even now his trunks were full of them. And it was true that he had a hoard of gold. But what was the use of all that when the thought never left him for a moment that shirts slowly but surely wear at the seams, that shoes get down at heel and grow thin in the uppers and soles, that there is no completely safe place where money can be hid? Of what avail were twenty years of dog's work and sacrifice when neither money nor position nor clothes can ward off Fate ("that bitch Fate" as Rotta used to say to himself in his agonized soliloquies at night), when everything splits, cracks, and wears out, and through all the patches and cracks in coats and shoes, there shows, though visible to him alone, the same disgraceful poverty which he thought he had left behind at Trieste, far, far behind and for ever. His present anxiety over the guarding and keeping of his money was as like as two sisters to his childhood's anxiety over the perpetual shortage of small change, and his present agony of scraping and saving was like his old agony of poverty and want. What was the use of it all? What was the use, when after so many efforts and vain shifts and endeavours, a man found himself back at his starting point; when the same meanness and coarseness crept back into his thoughts, though by another way, and the same harshness and uncouthness into his manner of speech and behaviour; when, in order to keep what had been won, there was still the same hateful need for economy which is the companion of poverty? In short, what was the use of having much and being somebody, when a man could not free himself from the fear of poverty, or from low thoughts, or from coarseness of speech, or from uncertainty of manners, when a bitter, indelible, invisible poverty accompanied a man's every step, and this fairer, better, calmer life faded like a deceiving vision?

Seeing that it was all in vain and that he could not easily escape from his own beginnings and from his own childhood, Rotta tilted his head still more firmly back, stepped out still more jauntily, looked with still greater disdain upon those around him, grew still more economical, maintained a still more inflexible

order in his office, and became still stricter and more merciless towards his juniors and dependants.

Besides Nikola Rotta there were two subordinate officials in the Austrian Consulate-General. The Chancery clerk, Franz Wagner, was a German settler from Slavonski Brod, small, fair, serviceable, gifted with a perfect handwriting and tireless at his work. A little grey man, who dissolved in humility before the glances of his seniors but hid within himself, repressed and throttled, a large quantity of that inconspicuous and unuttered, but bitter and deadly, clerical spite which later, when he had risen in his career, he would vent on the head of some wretched subordinate who now perhaps was a boy at school. This Wagner was Rotta's chief antagonist. The two of them battled and fought as if they had been born to be enemies.

The book-keeper, Peter Markovac, was a Slavonian, a sturdy noncommissioned officer, good-looking, ruddy-faced, with black, upturned moustaches, trim, well-trained, completely taken up with his own appearance, thoroughly content with himself and feeling not the least need to think about anything else.

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**I**t was no longer autumn but the winter had not yet begun. It was the season, or rather unseason, which is neither autumn nor winter and is worse than either, that freak of the year which lasts for days or weeks — days which are as long as weeks, weeks which seem longer than months. Rain and mud and a snow which turns into rain while it is still in the air and turns into mud as soon as it has fallen. From behind the clouds a pale and powerless sun colours the east with a faint flush at its rising and before the day ends shows itself again the west as a little yellowish light, until the grey day passes into black night. By day, as by night, a damp mist strikes up from the earth and down from the sky, drizzling, creeping, enveloping the town and pervading everything; invisible, all-powerful, it alters the colour and the shape of things, the temper of animals,

the conduct, thoughts and dispositions of men. The wind which sweeps twice a day through the bowl of the valley shifts this mist from its place, only to bring in fresh waves of humidity, with sleet and the smell of dripping forests. In this way mist is merely expelled and replaced by more mist, that is to say, a cold, raw mountain vapour about the sodden, mouldering town. On both sides of the valley freshets open up, springs overflow and streams become torrents. Meagre trickles which till now have been scarcely noticeable are transformed into waterfalls which rush and tear down the mountainside and tumble into the bazaar like a peasant dizzy with drink. And through the middle of the town the Lašva rolls and murmurs, swollen, agitated and transformed. There is nowhere where one can escape the roar and tumult of these waters or shield oneself from the cold and mist which strike up from them: they break into every room and even penetrate into bed. The sole defence of every living creature is its own warmth. The stone in the wall drips with a cold sweat and wood becomes dank and friable. In the face of this deadly onslaught of the mist everything withdraws into itself and takes up the most effective posture of resistance. Animals huddle up against animals, seed lies still in the earth, and trees drip and freeze, hiding their secret life in the pith of their wood and down among their warm roots.

The local people, accustomed and hardened to all this, manage to endure it and maintain, feed and warm themselves as inclination or experience directs, each according to his abilities and habits and the resources of his station and place in society. The rich never leave their houses except upon great need but pass the day and sleep in heated rooms, warm their hands at the green tiles of earthenware stoves, and wait with a patience which always outlasts by a day even the longest winter and foul weather. No one is troubled with the fear that he may miss something or that someone else may take advantage of him or steal a march on him, since everyone lives in the same conditions, at the same pace and the same manner of life. Everything they need is there to hand under lock and key, in the cellar, in the attics, in the larder or the store. They know their winter and do not meet it unprepared.

With the poor it is the other way round. Days of this kind drive them from home, for poverty provides no winter quarters, and the man who in the summer never turned his head to look at another must now go out and earn, borrow or beg, to scrape together something to take home. The poor, with heads down, and hugging themselves with goosefleshed arms, collect food and fuel, cover their backs and heads with old sacks, rolled up like an onion, swaddle and wrap themselves into shapeless bundles of tatters, tie up their feet in skins, rags and bark, creep out from under eaves and projecting casements, skirt carefully round the puddles, jump from stone to stone over the little runnels, shaking their feet like cats, blow into their hands or warm them on their own thighs, shivering or chattering. They work, serve or beg, and in the thought of the food and firing which these shifts will procure them they find strength to endure it all.

In this way the people of Travnik get through the grim winters to which they have been used from birth. It is another matter for such foreigners as chance has cast into this narrow valley which at this time of year is dark and as full of damp and draughts as the passages of a police-station.

Into the Residency, which was generally as noisy and lively as a cavalry barracks, the mist crept like a disease, with a sense of anxious foreboding. The Vizier's Mamelukes, for whom this was the first winter in their lives, shivered, grew pale and dispirited, and looked about them with mournful, ailing eyes like tropical animals transported to a northern country. Many of them lay all day long, with their heads wrapped in a blanket, coughing and utterly homesick for their warm and distant native land. The very animals which the Vizier had brought to Travnik, the Angora cats, the parrots and monkeys, neither moved nor cried nor amused their master, but moped and sat silent and waited, huddled in a corner, for the sun to warm and cheer them.

The Secretary and the other dignitaries kept to their rooms as if there were a flood outside. All their apartments have big winter stoves which are stoked from the passage and the servants put into them whole piles of thick beech logs which give out a great heat and keep the fire in all night, so that in the morning a new fire can be kindled on the remains of last night's ashes which are still smouldering. In these rooms which never grow

cold, it is pleasant, at daybreak, to hear the stove being opened from outside, the ash being scraped out and fresh wood being put in, log after log. But even here disquiet comes creeping in long before the early dusk. People try to ward it off, they make up games and diversions, and visit and chat with each other.

The Vizier himself lost his native cheerfulness and active spirit. Several times a day he would go into the twilight council hall on the ground floor, with its thick walls and its widely spaced little windows, since the airier and lighter upper hall is abandoned in the battle with the cold and is never heated or opened throughout the winter. Here he summoned the older and higher officers to pass away the time in conversation. He talked long, of trifling matters, only to drive away his memories of Egypt, his thoughts of the future and that longing for the sea which distracted him even in sleep. Some ten times a day he would say ironically to each of his people:

"It's a fine country, my friend! A grand country! What sin can we have committed against God to deserve such a fate?"

And each of them would answer him with a few glum and disagreeable words about the country and the climate. "A dog's hole," said the Secretary. "Enough to make a bear start crying," moaned the Vizier's fellow-countryman and armourer, Yunuzbeg. "Now I see they sent us here to die," declared Ibrahim Hodja, an intimate of the Vizier's, and screwed up his yellow face into long wrinkles as if he were in fact preparing to pass away. So they outdid each other in complaints and lightened their common burden a trifle at least. And through all these conversations could be heard the roar of water and the whisper of rain and one could feel the presence of that sea of mist which for days had been encircling the Residency and penetrating into every crack and aperture which showed itself.

On the arrival of Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak, the Vizier's Deputy, who used to ride several times a day through the town irrespective of rain and cold, they would break off their conversation and stare at him as a prodigy. In talking to the Deputy, a tough, straightforward Bosnian, the Vizier tried to be moderate and cautious, but finally asked him jokingly:

"For God's sake, man, does this town often go through this sort of catastrophe?"

And Suleiman Pasha would answer gravely in his bad Turkish:

"This is no catastrophe, Pasha, praise be to God, but the winter has begun well and just as it should. When the winter begins wet and ends fine we know it will be a good year. You will see when the snow falls and the big frosts come and the sun shines, it will be firm under foot and sparks will dance before your eyes. It will be fair and fine, as God made it and as it should be."

But the Vizier shuddered at these new marvels which his Deputy promised him with such enthusiasm, rubbing his wrinkled, blackened hands and warming his wet gaiters at the stove.

"Ugh, don't say such things, my friend and companion. Spare us a little, if you can," said the Vizier with amazement.

"Oh no, no! It's the gift of God, God's own gift. It's a poor thing when winter's not winter," the Deputy stood firmly and earnestly to his point. He was quite impervious to the subtle jokes of these Osmanlis and quite insensitive to their sensibility. He sat upright, cold and hard, among these shivering and chaffing foreigners, who gazed at him with appalled curiosity as if he were the one who had so clumsily arranged the weather and the seasons of the year. And when the Deputy got up, wrapped in his wide black cloak, to go riding through the icy rain along the muddy road to his own house, they would look at each other in horror and despair, and as soon as the door had closed behind him, they would go on with their joking and cursing at the Bosnians and Bosnia and the sky above it, until their sharp words and their insulting expressions made them feel at least a little more comfortable.

In the French Consulate, too, life became quieter and more secluded. Madame Daville conducted her first experiments with the Travnik winter. She turned everything to advantage, took note of everything for future reference, and for everything she found a remedy and a cure. Wrapped in a grey cashmere shawl, wiry and active, she went daily all over the huge Turkish house, giving orders for the work that needed to be done, managing with difficulty to make herself understood by the servants since she had no knowledge of the language and the local people were unskilled in housework, but always in the end getting her way and securing more or less what she wanted. At a time such as

this the house revealed its deficiencies and shortcomings. The roof leaked, the floorboards gave, the windows would not shut properly, the plaster kept peeling, the stoves smoked. But Madame Daville succeeded finally in patching, fixing and arranging everything. Her thin hands, usually so red, were now blue with cold and never rested for a moment in the struggle with repairs, damages and disorder. On the ground floor, which was a trifle damp but light and well heated, sat Daville and his young Vice-Consul. They talked of the war in Spain, of the French authorities in Dalmatia, of the couriers who failed to arrive or arrived at the wrong time, of the Ministry's failure to answer their entreaties and requests, and, most frequently of all, they talked of the bad weather and of Bosnia and the Bosnians. They talked quietly and expansively like people who are waiting for the servants to bring in the candles or announce dinner, until the conversation passed insensibly to general questions and turned to dispute and dissension.

It was that time of day between day and night when the candles are not yet burning but it is already too dark to read. Desfossés had just come in from a walk: even in this weather he did not give up for a single day his sorties into the neighbourhood. His face was still ruddy and wet from the wind and rain and his short hair was tangled and tousled. Daville had difficulty in hiding his displeasure at these excursions which he judged to be dangerous to health and prejudicial to the dignity of the Consulate. In general he was irritated by this active and enterprising young man, by his vivacity of mind and inquisitiveness. The young man, meanwhile, impervious to censure and completely inaccessible to the Consul's point of view, discoursed enthusiastically about the discoveries and experiences which had come his way in the course of his walks through Travnik and the country round.

"Ah," retorted Daville, "here in Travnik and for a hundred miles about there's nothing but a wilderness of mud inhabited by wretches of two kinds, torturers and tortured, and we are unlucky enough to have to live among them."

Desfossés, quite unshaken, pointed out that, although seemingly dead and shut away from the world, the country was far from being a wilderness but had, on the contrary, both variety



and interest from every point of view and even an expressiveness of its own. The people, it was true, were divided in religion, full of superstition, subjected to the worst government in the world and consequently backward and miserable in many respects; but at the same time they were rich in mental capacity and full of character and abounded in curious customs. In any case it was worth while taking the trouble to enquire into the causes of their wretchedness and backwardness. As for the fact that Monsieur Daville, Herr von Mitterer and Monsieur Desfos-sés, being foreigners, found life in Bosnia irksome and unpleasant, that was neither here nor there. The worth and value of a country were not to be assessed by the way the Consul of a foreign power happened to feel there. "On the contrary," said the young man, "I think there are few countries in the world less deserted and less monotonous. You have only to dig down a foot into the ground to find tombs and remains of bygone ages. Every field here is a graveyard, and a multiple one at that: the whole place is one burial-ground above another, exactly in the order the different native races came to birth and died in the course of the centuries, era after era and generation after generation. And graveyards are a sign of life, not of depopulation."

"Eh!" said the Consul, brushing aside like an invisible fly the young man's way of expressing himself, to which he could never get accustomed.

"And there are not only graveyards. Today, as I was riding along the Kalibunar road, I saw a place where the earth had been washed away from the surface by the rain. To a depth of about eight feet, you could see the traces, like geological layers, one on top of another, of earlier roads which had run along the same valley. At the bottom there were heavy slabs, the remains of a Roman road, four feet above were the remains of the surface of a mediaeval highway and last of all the gravel and bank of the present Turkish road we go by. So this chance cross-section showed me two thousand years of human history and three separate eras which had buried each other. So you see!"

"Yes, I see. But if we start considering things from that point of view . . ." said Daville, but only for the sake of saying something. He was not listening so much as looking at the young

man's cold, shining brown eyes, as if he longed to understand better what manner of eyes those could be that looked at the world about them in such a way.

The young man went on to tell of the traces of neolithic settlements on the road to the village of Zabilje, where, before the rains began, he had found knife-blades and saws of pyrites which might have lain in the clay for tens of thousands of years. He had found too in the field a certain Karahodjić, a surly, vigorous old man, who would not so much as hear a word of anyone digging or exploring for anything in his ground. He had looked long and wrathfully at the stranger and his kavass as they returned towards Travnik.

On the way home the kavass had related the origin and fortunes of the Karahodjić family. More than two centuries ago they had left this part of the country and settled in Slavonia, near Požega, where they had acquired a large estate. A hundred and twenty years later, when the Turkish forces were obliged to withdraw from Slavonia, they too had left their fine establishment near Požega, and had gone back to their lesser and poorer lands at Zabilje. There was still preserved in their family a huge cauldron or copper kettle, which they had brought with them as a token of their lost estates and their lost lordship, when humiliated and embittered, they had returned under their ancestor to Bosnia. Besides this family cauldron there had survived among them a certain tradition: They would never be left at home in any war which might be undertaken against the Germans and every member of the family was bound to do anything in his power to see that the lordship they had lost in Slavonia returned to them one day. And if, by misfortune and by God's permission, the Germans should ever go so far as to cross the Sava, they were bound to defend these poor fields at Zabilje, as long as they could, and when they could hold out no longer, to flee further, even though it might be from place to place through the whole extent of the Turkish dominion, even to the uttermost parts of the Empire, the unknown lands of China and Cathay.

As he told this story, the kavass pointed out to the young man, beside a plum orchard above the road, a little Turkish tomb on which two pillars of white stone stood out. They were

the tombs of the old Karahodja and his son, the grandfather and father of the old man who was still standing, with his hackles up, beside the fence, muttering angrily with moving lips and flashing eyes.

"You see," said the young man, gazing at the twilight and the misty window-panes, "I don't know which fascinated me more, those traces of the Stone Age, dating from ten thousand years before Christ, or that old man who guards the inheritance of his ancestors and will not allow anyone to lay a finger on his land."

"I see," said Daville mechanically and absently, wondering only what the young man saw in it all.

Walking up and down the room in conversation in this way, the two men halted by the window. Outside the early dusk was closing in. As yet no lights were burning anywhere. Only, low in the valley, beside the water's edge, a faint gleam quivered from Abdulla Pasha's tomb. It was the light which burns continually above that Pasha's grave; its feeble flame was always vaguely visible from the Consulate window, even when the other lights in the town were no longer burning or had already been put out. Standing by the window, waiting for the full twilight, the young man and the Consul had often talked about the "never-failing light" and the Pasha whose lamp they had grown to accept as something permanent and familiar. Desfossés knew the story of that as well.

This Abdulla Pasha had been a native of this country. While still in his youth, he had distinguished himself and grown rich. He had gained swift promotion as a soldier and as a governor but just as he had been appointed Vizier at Travnik, he had died suddenly in the flower of his age and had been buried here. He had died, it was said, of poison. He remained in men's memories as a mild and just ruler. A chronicler of Travnik had remarked that "under Abdulla Pasha's rule the poor knew no distress". Before his death he had left his property to the dervishes of Travnik and to other establishments. He had left a substantial sum of money to build this fine tomb of good stone and a sum from the revenue of his houses and rents to ensure that a taper of more than common thickness should burn night and day beside his tomb. His grave was always covered with

a green pall on which was embroidered the inscription "May the All-Highest lighten this tomb". It had been composed by the learned men from the dervish monastery as an expression of their gratitude to their benefactor.

Desfossés had managed to discover the whereabouts of this Vizier's will and looked upon it as an interesting document, typical of the people and their ways. This evening he complained that no one would allow him to see and copy it.

The conversation died away. In the silence which prevailed for a moment there could be heard from the twilight which was spreading deeper and deeper outside the long-drawn notes of some unintelligible song like a wailing from some watery depth. A man's voice was singing in the street, then broke off the song, then took it up once more after a few steps. It grew steadily further and fainter. Daville rang impatiently and ordered the candles to be brought.

"Oh, that music! Heavens! that music!" the Consul moaned. Bosnian singing reduced him to desperation. As happened every evening, Musa, called the Singer, was passing up the steep streets. He lived in one of the cluster of houses lost in the hillside gardens above the Consulate.

Desfossés who had investigated and been into everything, also knew the story of this drunkard and ne'er-do-well who went home every evening by this same way, lurching and singing his long drawn out melody hoarsely and in snatches.

There lived once in Travnik old Krdjalija, a man of humble origin and no particular standing but extremely rich. He dealt in arms, the business which pays best of all, since a man who needs a gun does not ask the price but pays any money to get it at the moment and the spot when he needs it. There were two brothers. The elder brother worked with his father, while Musa was sent to school at Sarajevo. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly old Krdjalija died. He was in good health when he went to bed and next morning they found him dead. Musa broke off his schooling and returned to Travnik. At the partition of the property it emerged that the old man had left behind him an astonishingly small amount of cash. All kinds of rumours began to circulate about the death of old Krdjalija. Nobody would believe — and indeed it was difficult to believe — that the old man had

had no ready money, and many people had their doubts about the elder brother and kept urging Musa to protest and claim his rights. Besides all this, even in the partition of what property was left, the elder brother persisted in fleecing and cheating the younger. This elder brother was a tall, handsome fellow but he was one of those chilly people whose eyes remain dark even when they are laughing. While the settlement was still going on and Musa was wavering between his natural indifference to money and to everything that money brings and the counsels of the bazaar, something far worse and far more dreadful happened. Both brothers had their eyes on the same girl, a girl from Vilić. Both had asked her in marriage. She was given to the elder. Then Musa disappeared from Travnik. There was no further talk of the dubious settlement between the brothers nor of Krdjajlija's death. The elder brother attended to his work and increased his fortune. After two years Musa came back completely changed, whiskered, pale, thin and with the heavy, vague look of a man who sleeps little and likes drink. From that time forward, he lived on his share of the property, which was by no means small but was in poor repair and neglected. And so with the passage of years, from being a handsome lad and a rich man's son, with a marvellous voice and a perfect ear, he became the wasted wretch who lived by his singing and lived only for drink, a silent, harmless tippler the children turn to look at. Only his famous voice for long remained the same. But now even his voice was beginning to go as his health grew worse and his property melted away.

The boy brought in the candlesticks. Shadows fluttered about the room, then settled. The windows suddenly clouded with darkness. The tipsy singer's song faded right away; the barking of the dogs which had answered him fell silent too. Silence closed once more about everything. The Consul and the young man said no more. Each was thinking his own thoughts, but each longed within himself to be far from that spot and in other company.

Once again it was Desfossés who broke the silence. He talked of Musa the Singer and others like him. Daville interrupted him, declaring that this ear-splitting, drunken neighbour of theirs was no exception but the true expression of a society

of which brandy, idleness and coarseness were the distinguishing marks. Desfossés denied this. Such people, he pointed out, exist in all communities, and are bound to do so. The world regards them with horror and pity, but also with a kind of religious reverence, much as the ancient Greeks revered a spot which had been struck by lightning. But such people are not in the least typical of the community. On the contrary, they are considered as lost men, as exceptions. The existence of such outcast, solitary folk, abandoned to their vices and their isolation and to swift decline, only shows how strong are the ties and how pitilessly severe are the laws of society, religion and family in a patriarchal community. This is true both of the Turks and of the *rayah* of all faiths. In such communities everything is interconnected, everything is firmly bound up with everything else, and the whole fabric is communally maintained and inspected. Each individual watches over the whole society and the whole society over each individual. One house observes another, one street keeps an eye on another, since each is responsible for the rest and all for all and each is completely bound up with the fortunes not only of his relations and housemates but his neighbours, fellow-believers and fellow-citizens. In this lie the strength and the slavery of these people. The life of an individual is possible only within this system and the life of the whole is possible only upon such conditions. If anyone breaks away from this order and goes off on his own account and follows his own inclinations, he is exactly the same as a suicide and sooner or later he falls, beyond help and beyond recall. Such is the law of these communities, and an account of it is still to be found in the Old Testament. It was also the law of the ancient world. Marcus Aurelius says somewhere: "The man who evades the obligations of the social order is the same as an exile". It is against this law that Musa too has offended and the outraged law and the injured community are taking their revenge and punishing him.

Daville, once more, was contemplating the young man rather than listening attentively to him, and he thought, "He seems determined this evening to explain and justify all the horrors and hideousness of this country. He has probably got to this point in his book on Bosnia and now feels the need to deliver a lecture on it to me or anyone else. Perhaps it has all only just

come into his head. Ah well, that's youth I see before me at this moment. Superficial, self-confident, strong in self-expression and firm in conviction. Well, well, such is youth!"

"I hope, my dear fellow, that we shall read all that in your book, but now let's see what there is for supper," said Daville, interrupting the young man's discourse and his own meditations on it.

At supper the conversation ran on everyday things and happenings and Madame Daville joined in with brief and practical comments. They talked mostly of cooking, recalling memories of the food and wine of the various regions of France, drawing comparisons with Turkish food, deploring the lack of French vegetables, French wines and French spices. A few minutes after eight Madame Daville gave a brief, suppressed yawn. It was the sign that dinner was over and immediately after she withdrew and went off to the nursery. The Consul and Desfossés parted half an hour later, and so the day ended. The nocturnal side of life at Travnik began.

Madame Daville sat by the bed of the youngest child and knitted, exactly as she had done all the rest of her work during the day, rapidly and conscientiously, in silence, and with the application of an ant.

The Consul was in his study once more, sitting at his little writing table. In front of him was the manuscript of his epic on Alexander the Great. For years now Daville had been engaged on this work, begun so long ago. He worked slowly and fitfully but he thought of it many times a day in connection with everything he saw, heard and experienced. As has already been said, this poem of his had grown to be a kind of second, easier and better world which he controlled at will. It contained no difficulties and no opposition and he found in it easy solutions to everything within and about him which was unsolved and insoluble. In it he sought consolation for everything that oppressed him and compensation for everything that real life failed to give or allow. Several times a day Daville fled to his "paper world" and propped himself, inwardly, on some thought from his poem, like a lame man on his crutch. And conversely, when he heard news of events in the war, when considering some incident or employed on some piece of work, he often, in his thoughts, transferred

it to his poem. And just because in doing so he cast it all back some thousands of years, all these things lost their painfulness and sharpness and in appearance at least, became easier and more bearable. This did not, of course, make things any easier in reality nor was the poem any nearer the likeness of a true work of art: but a good many people lean for inward support on odder and vaguer illusions than a poetic work, with its prearranged subject, its fixed metre and its strict rhyme.

This evening, too, Daville set before him the thick manuscript in its green folders, as a man makes a movement which has already grown to be a habit. But ever since he came to Bosnia and had involved himself in consular work among the Turks, these evening sessions had yielded less and less result and less and less satisfaction. The pictures would not form, the lines ran clumsily into their mould and emerged from it incomplete, the rhymes would not hammer one on another, as they once used to do, so that sparks flew from them; they remained incomplete like some monster in the womb. Very often the green tapes of the folders were not even untied but the manuscript formed a pad for little slips of paper on which the Consul made notes of what had to be done the following day or what had been left undone the day before. In those moments after supper all the things that had been done or said in the course of the day that was over came up for review and instead of rest and diversion they brought the need for new effort and opened up afresh worries that had already been worried over to excess. Letters which had gone that day to Split, Constantinople or Paris rose again in their entirety before his eyes and immediately there stood out, clearly and remorselessly, everything that he had omitted to say or that had been superfluously or clumsily said. He flushed red with anger and dissatisfaction at himself. The conversations which he had had with people that day, uncoiled themselves from his memory down to the smallest detail, not only the serious and important conversations about service and official matters, but the minor, insignificant ones. He saw clearly the person to whom he was talking, he heard every intonation of his words; he saw himself too and noticed clearly the deficiencies in what he was saying and all the importance of what for unfathomable reasons he did not say. And all at once complete and cogent sentences



occurred to him which he should have uttered or have spoken in reply instead of the feeble and colourless words and replies which he had in fact pronounced. The Consul whispered them now to himself, even as he felt that he did so all in vain and too late.

In such conditions poems do not grow and such thoughts give a man unpleasant dreams, if he succeeds in getting to sleep at all.

That evening there still re-echoed in the Consul's ears the whole of his talk with Desfossés a little while before. Suddenly it struck him clearly how much immature discursiveness there was in his tales of triple layers of roadway from different centuries, of neolithic tools, of Karahodja and Musa the Singer, of the family and social structure of Bosnia. Yet to all these youthful imaginings, which, it seemed to him, could not stand up to the lightest touch of criticism, he had merely replied like one paralyzed or bewitched, "I see, I see, but..." What the devil did he see, he now asked himself. He felt humiliated and absurd, but at the same time he was furious with himself for having in general lent to these insignificant talks an attention they did not deserve. After all, what was the importance of such a conversation? And who had he been talking to? Not to the Vizier, or von Mitterer; he had merely chattered on with this young greenhorn about matters of no significance at all. Still, the thought would not be stayed or stifled, and just as he had begun to hope that he had managed to forget these trifles, he started up suddenly from the table and found himself in the middle of the room with outstretched hands, saying to himself, "I ought to have replied at once to his half-baked expositions 'The thing is thus and thus' and put the boy in his place. Even in the smallest matters one ought to express one's opinions freely and fully, and fire them off fair and square — let other people take offence afterwards if they must. One shouldn't keep them in and wrestle with them afterwards like a vampire." Yes, that's what he ought to have done and what he had not done, and never would do either tomorrow or the day after whether in his chats with this callow young man or in his conversations with serious persons. And he was doomed to behold it in a vision every evening, after supper and before going to bed, at this late hour when the

ordinary words of every day became as huge and indestructible as apparitions.

Thus Daville communed with himself, turning back once more to his place behind the little writing table beside the curtained window. But his thoughts passed beyond his control: in vain he dispelled them, he was quite unable to give himself to anything else.

"He even finds something interesting in that ghastly singing; and that too he's prepared to defend," the Consul complained to himself. Driven by the morbid necessity to put his own case and to have the matter out with the young man, Daville had written quickly and currently on the white paper which should have been lined with verses on the exploits of Alexander the Great:

"I have heard these people sing and noticed that in that too they exhibit the same wildness and unhealthy vehemence that they do in every other activity of their minds or bodies. I have read in a book of travels by a Frenchman who passed through this part of the world more than a hundred years ago and listened to these people, that their singing is more like the howling of dogs than human song. Even granted that people here have since changed for the worse, granted that that good old Frenchman was not well enough acquainted with this country, I still find there is something far less sinister and far less savage-hearted in the howling of a dog than in the singing of these people when they are drunk or simply carried away by their passions. I have noticed how they turn up their eyes when they sing, and grit their teeth and beat on the wall with their fists, whether it is that they have drunk too much brandy or simply that they are driven by some internal need to howl and agonize and lash about them. And I have come to the conclusion that all this has no connection whatsoever with music or singing such as are heard among other peoples, but that it is merely a means of expressing their hidden passions and the evil desires to which otherwise, for all their laxity, they would not be able to give utterance, since human nature itself does not permit of it. I have talked about this to the Austrian Consul-General. In spite of all his military stiffness he too feels the whole horror of this wailing and shrieking which one hears at night about the alleys

and gardens and by day from the inns. '*Das ist ein Urjammer* — that is a cry from before the beginning of time,' he said. I think, nevertheless, that von Mitterer, as usual, was making the mistake of overrating these people. It is, quite simply, the raving of savages who have lost their simplicity."

The narrow slip was covered with writing. The last word stood almost in the extreme corner at the bottom of the sheet. The zest with which he had written and the ease with which he had found words and comparisons had warmed him up and the Consul felt something approaching relief. Worn out, riddled with worry, overburdened with duties which this evening seemed to him beyond his strength, with a bad digestion and insomnia as his sole companions, he was sitting, distracted and motionless over his manuscript when Madame Daville knocked at the door. She was already prepared for bed. Under a swathing of white her features looked still smaller and sharper. She had just said goodnight to the sleeping children and tucked the bedclothes securely round them. Then she had repeated on her knees the traditional evening prayer, praying God to give her peaceful rest that night and that tomorrow she might rise from her bed fresh and sound "even as I surely believe that I shall rise from the grave at the Day of Judgement". Now, with candle in hand, she put her head through the half-opened door.

"Enough for today, Jean. Time to go to bed."

Daville reassured her with a wave of the hand and a smile and sent her off to bed, but he remained alone with his papers until his eyes grew dizzy and the lines swam and everything became as dark and dim as the nightly aspect of a world which by day seems clear and understandable.

Then he rose from the table and went to the window and thrusting the curtain a little aside he looked into the impenetrable darkness, to see whether the lights at the Residency and at the Austrian Consulate were still visible, the last traces of that daylight world. Instead, there appeared on the misty window-pane his own lighted room and the vague outlines of his own face. Anyone who at that moment had looked in the direction of the French Consulate and had seen that streak of light, would never have guessed what was tormenting and keeping from his sleep that sober, serious Consul who by day never wasted a

minute on what was not practical, useful and directly connected with his work.

But the Consul was not the only one awake in that great house. Directly above his room, on the first floor, three windows with curtains of Bosnian linen were lit up. Here Desfossés sat over his own papers. For other reasons and in a different way he too was watchful and was spending his night in a manner he little desired and one which was neither congenial nor pleasant to him. The young man had not preserved in his memory the conversations of the day. On the contrary, within five minutes he had already forgotten his talk with the Consul and the Consul himself. He was not oppressed by weariness or by the need for repose or by worry over tomorrow; and yet he was racked with disquiet and choked with the unsatisfied longings of youth.

At night there would rise up before him memories of women, not memories only but real women whose white skins and glancing smiles would shatter the darkness and silence like a cry and break into his spacious room. He would see the great plans, the daring, youthful plans with which he had set out from Paris and which were to lead him far from this little provincial town in which he was submerged. He saw himself in some Embassy or in Parisian society, in the kind of places where one should be, and the kind of man he wished to become.

Every night his imagination played upon his feelings and his ambitions in this way, then deserted him and gave him over to the deathly Bosnian silence; and now the breath of this silence tormented and worried him. By day he could elude and stifle it in work, in walks and conversations, but at night that was impossible except by struggle and effort and these grew ever harder, because the silence overwhelmed, wiped out, extinguished and smothered the quiet and outward life of the town, it covered, engulfed and pervaded everything dead or alive.

From the day when, as we have seen, he had left Split, when he had turned once more above Klis and taken his last look at the tilled fields below him and the sea in the distance, the young man had in fact been ceaselessly at grips with this silence and in continual conflict with it. He found it in everything around him. In the architecture of the houses whose true face was turned towards the courtyard and only a dumb, forbidding back towards

the street: in the bearing of men and women; in their looks, which say much although their lips are silent. And even in their speech, when they at last ventured to speak, he was better able to distinguish their significant pauses than the words themselves. His ears and his mind felt how silence crept into each of their sentences between the words and into every word between the syllables, crept like rough water into a frail skiff. He marked their vowel-sounds, so colourless and indistinct that the speech of boys and girls sounds like an inaudible whispering which dies away in the silence. Even the singing which sometimes came to one's ears from a road or a courtyard, was nothing but a long cry of pain, muffled by silence at its source and in its utterance, as an integral, and indeed the most eloquent, part of the song. Even that part of life which emerged by day to the light of the sun, which would not be silenced and could not be entirely hidden — some trifle of ornament or some brief glimpse of sensuous beauty — even this was vowed to concealment and silence and with its finger on its lips sought refuge in obscurity and speechlessness and ran as it were to hide in the nearest doorway. Every living creature, and even inanimate things, started at every sound, turned from every glance and trembled for fear lest they should be obliged to utter a word or should be called by their true name.

Looking at these men and women, bowed, shrouded and eternally mute, without smile or gesture, Desfossés felt impelled to enquire rather into their hopes and fears, than into their daily lives, which were stifled and deadened to such an extent that they were lives only in name. Finally, after thinking continuously about this problem, he began to find examples and confirmation of his theory everywhere. Both in the very roughness of this society, which was not inconsiderable, and in its violent outbreaks he came to see a fear of straightforward expression, a crude and deliberate form of silence. And all his particular thoughts about these people (Where do they come from? How do they come to be? What are their aims? What are their beliefs? How do they love and hate? How do they grow old and die?), these, too, were merged, without ever reaching conclusion or expression, in that vague, tormenting atmosphere of silence which enveloped him completely, filled everything about him and strove to subdue

everything within him. The young man felt indeed, with alarm and more and more clearly, how this silence was corroding and infecting him himself, how it was filtering into his very pores and insensibly smothering his spirit and freezing his blood.

The nights were particularly burdensome. At times, some sharp and unexpected sound would make itself heard — a shot somewhere on the edge of the town, a dog barking at some unusual passer-by or in his sleep. It was heard only for a moment, so that it might make the silence seem deeper still; for the oppression at once closed over it again, like water of a bottomless depth. This silence makes sleep as impossible as any orgy of noise. One is forced to sit and feel how it threatens to disintegrate, crumble and obliterate one from the ranks of conscious, living beings. Every night, as Desfossés sat in this way by the fast dwindling candlelight, he seemed to hear the silence speaking to him in its soundless language:

“It won’t be for long that you step lightly, glance boldly, break into smiles, command at will free thoughts and open, outspoken words. You cannot remain here as you are. I shall bow your back, drive away the blood from your heart, cast down your eyes. I shall make of you a stalk of bitter weed, in a windy place, on stony ground. And your French mirror will never recognize you any more, nor even the eyes of your own mother.”

This was said to him, not abruptly, but quietly and inexorably, and even as it spoke, the silence was wrapping him and handling him, like a stepmother clothing her stepchild. It was clear to him that this silence was in fact death in a different form, a death which leaves the man alive, as a mere husk, but takes from him all capacity for living.

But no one surrenders without a struggle or dies without some attempt at defence, least of all a man of Desfossés’ age, upbringing and race. His youth and his wholesome nature fought within him against this evil thing, as against some unhealthy climate. And if it sometimes happened that at night his strength left him and his reason failed, the morning always delivered him, the sun raised him up, water braced him and his work and his enquiring mind sustained him.

This evening too, he was on the watch and managed to turn his thoughts from the loneliness and silence, to raise and

fix them on the living, audible, visible, tangible objects of daily actuality, and to protect himself in this way from the silence which treads down and buries everything and which wanted to penetrate into his consciousness as it penetrated into his room. He went through his daily jottings, collated and arranged them. Slowly and painfully his book on Bosnia was growing, all based on "real reality". Everything in it was buttressed with proofs, confirmed by figures and illustrated by examples. Without any eloquence or elegance of style, without any generalizations, its pages slowly accumulated, dry, even, cold and monotonous, as a defence against this insidious and delusive eastern silence which clouds, blurs, devours and smothers all things, makes them ambiguous, supersignificant and yet meaningless, until they vanish away somewhere beyond the range of our eyes and our understanding, into some dead limbo, leaving us blind, speechless and helpless, buried alive and cut off from the world, even though we are still in it.

When he had arranged and fair copied the notes he had taken that day, he found himself once again face to face with the silence of the night, which was so slow in passing. So he too sat, with his hands folded on his manuscript, carried away now into "unpractical" thoughts, till his eyes swam with fatigue and the solid words of his sober prose danced before his vision like miniature ghosts or apparitions.

Travnik! — Trav — nik! He repeated the word to himself, half aloud, like the name of some secret sickness, or like a magical formula which it is hard to recall and easy to forget. And the more he repeated it, the stranger it seemed to him: two dark vowels between dull consonants. This formula held for him by now more than he had ever imagined that the whole world could hold. It was not simply a word, the dull, cold name of a remote township, it was not Travnik; for him it was now Paris and Jerusalem, the capital of the world and the focus of life. Thus a man dreams from his childhood of great cities and famous battlefields, but the real and decisive battles for the preservation of his personality and the realization of everything he keeps instinctively hidden in himself are fought wherever his destiny happens to cast him, in God knows what narrow, nameless hole, without glamour, without beauty, and with no one to witness or judge.

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Without knowing it, the young man rose and went to the window and pushing aside the edge of the curtain he looked into the darkness. He did not know himself what he was looking for in that soundless, unlit night. Through the darkness, full of a mist which might be either rain or snow, it was impossible, that night, to see the feeble light in the curtained windows of the Austrian Consulate. Nevertheless, in that great house other candles were burning too and other people were sitting by them, bent over papers and over their own thoughts.

The Consul's study was a long, ugly room, sunless and airless, since its windows looked out on to a steep orchard. Consul-General von Mitterer had been sitting here for hours, beside a table piled with drafts and military manuals.

The fire was forgotten in the stove, his long pipe lay on the table, burnt out; the room was suddenly cold. The Consul had pulled his Service cape about him and was writing, covering indefatigably sheet upon sheet of yellowish draft paper. When he finished one sheet he warmed his cramped and chilly right hand at the flame of the guttering candles and reached for a fresh, clean sheet, smoothed it out with his palm, broached the first line, then quickly filled the page with the thickset, regular hand written by all officers and non-commissioned officers of the Imperial and Royal Army.

That evening, after supper, as so often before by day and by night, Frau von Mitterer had entreated the Colonel, with tears, threats and adjurations, to write to Vienna and ask for a transfer from this horrible wilderness. And just as on every other evening, the Colonel had comforted his wife and had pointed out to her that it was not so easy and simple a matter as she imagined, to apply for a transfer and run away from hardship, that to do so would mean the end of his career, and not a very honourable end at that. Anna Maria had overwhelmed him with reproaches, without listening to a single one of his explanations, and had threatened, through her sobs, to "take her child" and leave Travnik, Bosnia, and him. At last, in order to calm his wife, the Consul had promised, as so often before, to write his application that very evening, and as so often before, he had not kept his promise, since he could not easily bring himself to take such a step. He had left his wife and daughter

in the dining-room and had lighted his pipe and withdrawn into his study, not in order to write the application which he could hardly induce himself to frame, but to continue the work which gave him satisfaction and regularly filled his evenings.

For nine nights already von Mitterer had been working on a long report to the military authorities at Vienna: he was describing the environs of Travnik from the military point of view. With a great many line drawings and sketches, with many figures and much useful information, he was now describing the fourteenth position which would have to be considered by a hypothetical army breaking into the Lašva valley towards the defended fortress of Travnik. In the introduction to this *magnum opus*, he had already said that he had embarked on this work for the sake of the advantage which the Higher Command might derive from it, but also "in order to shorten the long evenings of monotony to which a foreigner in Travnik is condemned".

The night indeed was wearing on, but slowly, and von Mitterer wrote tirelessly and without pause. He described down to the minutest details the fortress of Travnik, its origins, what was thought and said of it, its true complement, the strength of its situation, the thickness of its walls, the number of cannon, its stocks of munitions, its water and food supplies. His pen squeaked, the candles guttered, line followed line, with measured words, accurate figures, facts clearly set out, sheets were added one on another, and the pile of sheets grew.

These were von Mitterer's best hours and this was his favourite spot. Beside his candles, bent over his writing and his papers, surrounded with silence, he felt as if he too were in a kind of impregnable fortress, shielded and under cover, far from all misunderstandings and ambiguities, with clear facts before him. From his very handwriting and his style to the thoughts he was expressing and the feelings which prompted him, everything linked him with the great Imperial and Royal Army, with something sound, permanent and secure on which a man can rely and in which he can lose himself with all his personal worries and doubts. He knows and feels that he is not alone and not abandoned to chance. Above him is a long line of superiors and below him a row of subordinates. That bears him up and sustains him. Everything is permeated and bound by innumerable

regulations, traditions and customs, everything is to pattern, everything is foreseen, stable, immutable, and lasts longer than oneself.

There is no greater happiness, no more blissful oblivion than is to be found in such a night and in such a place, where each finds salvation in his own dreams. And line upon line, sheet upon sheet, von Mitterer wrote his great report on the strategic positions of Travnik and its neighbourhood, which nobody would ever read and which would remain, under the dust of the archives, bearing somebody else's careless initial, bound up in a virgin file, unseen and unread, so long as the world went on, and writing and paper went on with it.

Von Mitterér wrote on. The night seemed to pant with the speed of its passing. The heavy Service cape warmed his back, his mind was awake but occupied with something which gave not pain but peace, which hastened the hours of the night and left one tired, but also with an agreeable feeling of duty done and a precious longing for sleep.

And so Colonel von Mitterer wrote, and cast aside care. His eyes did not dazzle nor did the words dance before them, but it seemed to him that between his regularly penned lines others could be dimly seen: masses of men drawn out to infinity in fine equipment and bright Imperial uniforms. As he wrote, he felt exhilarated and at peace as if he were working before the eyes of the whole of the Armed Forces, from the Supreme Command down to the latest Slavonian recruit. And when he got up, he looked long at his manuscript, not reading it but simply looking at it, and lost himself in that contemplation, and in it forgot the Travnik night and himself and all that belonged to him.

From this delightful half-sleep the Colonel was torn by light, crisp footsteps in the long passage, approaching like distant thunder. Suddenly the door opened. Frau von Mitterer rushed in, in clamorous excitement. Instantly the room was filled with the blast of the storm and the air with a multitude of disconnected, passionate words, which she began pouring out as soon as she entered the door and which mingled with the tapping of her heels on the bare floor. As she drew near, von Mitterer slowly rose and stood quietly erect until she reached the table. His happy, triumphant moments vanished without trace. Everything faded and went dark, everything lost meaning, value and

purpose. The manuscript before him dwindled into an insignificant pile of paper. All the Armed Forces retired in disorder and dissolved into a cloud of scarlet and silver. The pain in his liver, which he had forgotten, made itself felt once more.

Anna Maria stood before him and gazed at him with an angry eye which saw nothing but quivered gently just as everything about her face was quivering—eyelids, lips and chin. There were red patches on her cheeks and below her throat. She was wearing a dressing gown of fine, white wool, open at the neck and caught round her waist with a sash of cherry-coloured silk. On her shoulders was a little light shawl of white cashmere, wrapped across her breast and pinned with a large brooch of amethyst in a gold setting. Her hair was brushed back and bound with a broad strip of muslin, above which brown curls and ringlets showed in rich disorder.

“Joseph, for the love of God! . . .”

It always began with that. Those were the opening words which led on to a furious onslaught and to a wrathful tapping of heels about the house, to harsh and ugly words without connection or logic, to baseless assertions, causeless tears and endless painful wrangling.

The Colonel stood as still as a cadet caught off his guard. He knew that any movement or any word would provoke further outbreaks and add fuel to the flames.

“Joseph, for the love of God!” his wife repeated, already choking with sobs.

The merest slight and well-meaning movement of the Colonel's hand caused the tempest to break over him and over the objects nearest him, the sheets of manuscript on the table, through the chilly air filled with the reek of his cold pipe. His wife flared up. The wide sleeves of her white peignoir flashed about the room, until the candle flames fluttered now this way, now that. Her fine, firmly moulded arms shone out at times, bared to the shoulders. Her light shawl shifted about her and the amethyst brooch moved from side to side. Clusters of hair had escaped from her snood and coiled about her forehead as if electrified.

She poured out a spate of words, sometimes stifled and unintelligible, sometimes aloud, but distorted by her weeping and spluttering. The Colonel did not listen to them, he knew

them by heart; he merely waited for them to quieten and calm down, thus indicating that the scene was nearing its close. For nobody, not even Frau von Mitterer, could possibly muster so many thousands of words a second time, for a fresh outbreak.

For the moment, however, the storm was in progress and at the height of its clamour.

She knew, she said, that this evening, too, he had not written his plea for a transfer, although he had promised once more to do so for the fifteenth time, after supper. So she had come to see this monster of a man, more cold-blooded than any murderer, more soulless than the Turk, sitting over his filthy pipe and scribbling his idiocies which nobody reads (and it's all to the good that nobody does read them!), only to satisfy his insane ambition, the ambition of an incompetent fellow who does not even know to keep and shelter his own family, his wife and child, who are dying, collapsing, who . . . who . . .

All that was to follow was lost in loud weeping and in the vicious, rapid drumming of two small but powerful fists upon the table and its scattered papers.

The Colonel made a movement to lay his hand gently on her shoulder, but he saw at once that it was too soon and that the cloud had not yet discharged itself.

"Let me alone, you jailer, you cold-blooded torturer, you beast without soul or conscience. Beast! Beast!"

There ensued a fresh spate of words, then heavy, copious tears, then a quavering of the voice and a gradual relaxation. She was still sobbing, but now she allowed the Colonel to take her by the shoulders and lead her to a leather armchair. She sank into it with a sigh.

"Joseph . . . for the love of God!"

It was a sign the fit was over and that his wife was ready to accept any explanation without answering back. The Colonel stroked her hair and declared that he would sit down now, at once, and write his application, definitely and without delay, and the letter should be copied and dispatched in the morning. He stammered, he promised, he soothed, dreading fresh outbursts and fresh tears. But Anna Maria was tired and sleepy, dejected but silent and faint. She let the Colonel lead her to the bedroom,

wipe the last tears from her eyes, put her to bed and tuck her in with broken, loving words of no sense.

When he had returned to his room and placed his candlestick on the table, he felt a certain trembling and faintness and a still sharper pain in his right side, under the ribs. In these scenes, the worst moment for the Colonel was when everything was over, when he had managed to calm his wife and when, at the end of it all, he was left alone, each time with a clear realization that he could not go on living like this.

Once more the Colonel pulled his cape about him. It was heavy but cold, like an unfamiliar thing belonging to someone else. He sat down at the table shredded out some clean tobacco and began now, in earnest, to write his petition for a transfer.

Once again he wrote under the guttering, unsnuffed candles. He set out his previous achievements in the service, emphasized his readiness to continue giving of his best, but begged to be moved from this post. He disclosed the reasons, explained and demonstrated that only "a man without a family" could, in existing circumstances, live and work at Travnik. The words spaced themselves out with regularity, but they were as cold and dull as the links of a chain. Nowhere was there any of the glamour of a moment before, or any feeling of strength, or connection with the united whole. A crushed man, he wrote of his own weakness and shame but he wrote under an inexorable load which nobody could know or see.

The application was ready. The Colonel had decided that he really would send it the following day and now he read it through a second time, as if it were his sentence. He read on, but his thoughts were constantly leaving this lacrimose production and returning to the past.

He saw himself as a pale, sallow lieutenant sitting, all lathered, in the hands of the officers' barber and the barber shearing off his thick hair and the fine regulation queue of which he was so proud. He saw his head being shaved to the skin and preparations made for him to tour the Turkish market towns and the Serbian villages and monasteries, disguised as a Serb boy. He saw the discomfort and the pain, remembered his alarms and his wanderings. He saw his return to the Semlin garrison, after

a successful reconnaissance, and heard the greetings of his brother officers and the warm words of the commander.

He saw the dark rainy night, when he had crossed the Sava in a skiff with two soldiers and beached under the citadel, by the gate, to receive from his agents wax impressions of the keys of all the doors in the fortress of Belgrade. He saw himself handing over these keys to the Major, utterly happy but trembling with fever and fatigue.

He saw himself journeying in the mail wagon to Vienna as a man who "has made good" and is to receive a reward. He had upon him the Commander's letter speaking of him in terms of the highest praise, as of a young officer who is as shrewd as he is courageous.

He saw himself . . .

Something tapped lightly outside, in the passage. The Colonel pulled himself together in some alarm and stiffened at the thought that he heard once again his wife's tempestuous footsteps. He listened. Everything was quiet. Some trivial sound had misled him. But the scenes of a moment before had been wiped from his memory and would not return. In front of him lay the lines of his manuscript, but now dead and confused to his weary eyes. Where had he lost that young officer travelling to Vienna? Where were the freedom and daring of youth?

The Colonel rose abruptly from the table, like a man gasping for breath, who seeks relief; he went to the window and parted the green curtains a little, but two fingers' breadth away from his eyes, the night rose up before him like a wall of ice and darkness. Von Mitterer stood facing it like a man condemned, without the heart to turn and go back to the black lines of his petition on the table.

Standing thus and thinking of his transfer, he luckily had no notion how many nights, how many autumns and winters more he would pass, confined between that dark wall and his work-table, waiting in vain for a decision on his application. It was to lie in the archives of the *Geheime Hof und Staatskanzlei*, together with his great report on the strategic positions of the Travnik area, though in a different section. His application would arrive quickly and punctually in Vienna and would reach the



competent official, a grizzled, weary *Sektionschef*. He would read the thing through, one winter morning, in a high, light, well-warmed office with a view on to the Minorite church and would merely underline ironically in red pencil the sentence in which von Mitterer proposed that "a man without a family" should be sent to his post. He would write on the back that the Consul must be patient.

For the *Sektionschef* was a placid man, a confirmed bachelor, a refined musician and lover of the arts, who from his snug, exalted and secure situation could neither know nor imagine the Consul's troubles, nor the kind of place Travnik was, nor the kind of woman Anna Maria von Mitterer was, nor the possible depths of human unhappiness and need. Never, even in his last hour, in the pangs of death, would he find himself face to face with the kind of wall before which Colonel von Mitterer stood that night.

8

The year 1808 did not keep a single one of the promises Daville had seemed to hear that last fine autumn, as he rode above Kupilo. Truly, nothing is so liable to mislead us as our own feeling of tranquillity and pleasurable content at the course of events. It misled Daville too.

At the very beginning of the year Daville had sustained the heaviest blow which could have befallen him in his thankless work at Travnik. There occurred what, after all he had learned, Daville could least have expected. Davna found out, confidentially, that Mehmed Pasha was being replaced. The decree transferring him had not yet arrived, but the Vizier was already making secret preparations for his departure, with his belongings and his whole suite.

Mehmed Pasha, Davna explained, did not wish to wait for the decree at Travnik but preferred to leave the town earlier, while conditions were still favourable, and not to come back again. The Vizier was well aware of the look Turkish towns wear on the day when a messenger arrives with an Imperial decree

for the transfer of the present pashia and the installation of a new one. He could see the bold, hired post, who lives on such announcements and on the morbid curiosity of the bazaar and the underworld — lives by them and relishes them. He could see and hear him bursting into the town, urging on his horse, cracking his whip and howling at the top of his voice the names of the transferred and of the newly appointed Viziers.

*"Makhzul Mehmed-Pasha, makhzull Khazul, Suleiman-Pasha, khazul!"*

The crowd look at him with curiosity; amazed, they discuss the Sultan's decision, they become joyful, enthusiastic, riotous. Usually they curse the man who is leaving and praise the man who is to come. It is the moment when the name of the outgoing Pasha is thrown to the idle and simple folk like carrion to hungry dogs, for them to defile without fear of punishment, and to make coarse jokes upon. It is a cheap and easy way of puffing them up and making them feel heroes. Little folk, who never dared to lift their heads when the Pasha rode by, suddenly rise up as shrill avengers, even though the Pasha in question never did them any personal harm and did not even know of their existence. Often, in such cases, some half-baked student or decayed merchant may be seen and heard pronouncing awful judgement on the fallen Vizier over a glass of brandy, as if he had fallen in single combat at his hand, and thumping his chest:

"Ah, I'd sooner have lived to see this day than be given hafz Bosnia!"

Mehmed Pasha knew that it was like this, always and everywhere, that the mean and obscure trample on the bodies of those who have fallen in the domestic battles of the great. So it was understandable that in this case he preferred to slip away.

Daville at once sought an audience. At this Divan the Vizier admitted to him in the strictest confidence that he would indeed be leaving Travnik, on the pretext that he was already beginning to muster his preparations for the spring campaign in Serbia; he would not be coming back. From what the Vizier said it emerged that he had had notice from a friend in Constantinople that complete disorder prevailed there and that an internal struggle was secretly in progress between the groups and personalities

who had overthrown Sultan Selim last May. The only point on which all were agreed was the exile of all those who had shown themselves in any way in favour of the reforms and plans of the dethroned Sultan. In these circumstances the complaints of the Bosnian Begs against him as a friend of the French and a creature of Selim's regime had met with a good reception. He knew that he had already been transferred. He hoped that his friends had succeeded at any rate in his not being sent into exile but receiving some other pashalik far from Constantinople. In any case he wished to leave Travnik at once before the decree arrived and with the least possible disturbance, so as not to give his Bosnian opponents any chance of exulting over his defeat and revenging themselves upon him. He would await the decree regarding his new appointment somewhere on the way, at Sjenica or Prijepolje.

All this Mehmed Pasha said to Daville in that indefinite Oriental tone of voice which in matters of the utmost certainty does not completely preclude all doubt or the possibility of change and surprise. The Vizier's lips were never without a smile or, more exactly, without that row of white, even teeth, which flashed each time between his beard and his thick, black, well-tended moustaches — since neither the Vizier nor the Consul had cause for real laughter.

Daville looked at the Vizier, listened to the interpreter, and nodded with automatic politeness. In reality, he was stricken by the Vizier's declaration. That cold, painful sensation in the bowels, which, sometimes powerfully, sometimes faintly, had always accompanied his visits to the Residency and every conversation with the Turks, now cleft him clean in two, like some blunt implement dislocating thought and speech.

In the withdrawal of this Vizier from Bosnia Daville saw both a personal misfortune and a notable setback to the French Government. As he heard Mehmed Pasha talking with forced calm of his departure, he felt betrayed, slighted and abandoned in this cold country, among malicious, evil, irrational people whose thoughts and feelings one could never rightly know, a country where staying might also mean going, where a smile was not a smile and yes was not yes, just as no was never unequivocally no. He managed to string together a few sentences,

to tell the Vizier how much he regretted his leaving, to express the hope that the matter might perhaps come to a happy issue after all and to assure him of his own unalterable friendship and of the high regard of his Government. He left the Residency with the feeling that the whole future was black.

In this frame of mind Daville at once recalled the Kapidji-basha whom he had succeeded in forgetting. The death of this unfortunate man, which had never troubled anyone's conscience, began to disquiet him afresh, now that it was shown to have yielded small advantage.

At the beginning of the new year, the Vizier unobtrusively sent off his more valuable things and later left Travnik himself with his Mamelukes. The glad, vindictive rumour, which had begun to spread abroad among the Moslems of Travnik, was out of earshot now. The only man who knew the day of his going and who escorted the Vizier, was Daville.

The parting between the Vizier and the Consul was cordial. On a sunny January day Daville rode out with Davna four miles beyond Travnik. At a lonely wayside café, under an arbour bowed beneath the weight of the snow, the Vizier and the Consul exchanged their last heartfelt words and greetings.

The Vizier was rubbing his hands for cold and he tried hard not to let his smile fade away.

"Greet General Marmont," he said with that particular warmth of tone which is as like sincerity as one drop of water is like another and which leaves a convincing and reassuring impression even on the most suspicious hearer, "Please tell him and all those who should know, that I remain a friend of your noble country and a sincere worshipper of the great Napoleon, wherever Fate may cast me or circumstances bear me away."

"I will not fail to do so, I will not fail," said Daville, genuinely moved.

"And to you, my dear friend, I wish health, happiness and success, regretting only that I cannot be here to help you with the difficulties which you will always have with the unenlightened and barbarous people of Bosnia. I have personally commended your affairs to Suleiman Pasha who will replace me for the time

being. You can rely on him. He is rough and simple, like all Bosnians, but he is a man of honour whom one can trust. I tell you once again that it is only for your sake that I regret leaving. But so it must be. Had I chosen to be an executioner and a tyrant, I could have stayed in this place and crushed for ever these empty-headed, conceited Begs. But I am not such a one, and have no wish to be. That is why I am leaving."

Shivering with cold and ghastly pale, in his black cloak which reached to the ground, Davna translated, swiftly and mechanically, like a man who knows it all by heart already.

Daville knew well that what the Vizier was saying to him was not, and could not be, entirely and completely accurate, and yet every word went home to him. Every parting conjures up in us a double illusion. The man of whom we are taking leave, especially when, as in this case, it is likely to be for ever, appears far finer and more worthy of our attention and we ourselves feel ourselves to be much apter for open-hearted and unselfish friendship than in fact we are.

Then the Vizier mounted his tall roan horse, concealing his lameness by swift, sharp movements. A large escort moved off behind him. When the two groups — the Vizier's large group and Daville's small one — had withdrawn rather more than half a mile from each other, one of the Vizier's riders detached himself, shot away like an arrow and quickly came up with Daville and his escort, who at that moment had halted. Here the messenger suddenly reined in his mount at full speed and loudly pronounced these words: "The fortunate Lord Husrev Mehmed Pasha once again sends his noble greeting to the distinguished representative of the great French Emperor, with his good wishes that it may accompany his every step."

Surprised and a little bewildered, Daville ceremoniously raised his hat and the horseman darted off with the same celerity after the Vizier's escort which was riding along the snowy plain. In dealing with Orientals there are always details of this kind which agreeably surprise and confuse us, even though we know that they are not so much a sign of special attention or personal compliment as an integral part of their antique and inexhaustible ceremonial.

From behind the muffled Mamelukes looked like women. The powdering snow rose from under their horses' hooves and

grew more and more like a white and rosy cloud under the winter sun. As it retreated further, the band of horsemen dwindled steadily and the cloud of feathery snow grew larger and larger. The figures vanished in the cloud.

Daville returned along the frozen road which was hardly distinguishable from the rest of the snowy whiteness. The roofs of a few peasant houses, the fences and cabbage patches by their side, were under snow and marked only by thin, dark outlines on this white expanse. The shadows of rose and gold had turned to blue and grey, and the sky had grown dark. The sunny afternoon had passed swiftly into a winter twilight.

The horses stepped briskly and delicately. On their fetlocks danced little clots of frozen hair which the ice had caught.

Daville rode on, with the feeling that he was on his way back from a funeral.

He thought of the Vizier from whom he had just parted but he thought of him as something lost irrevocably and long ago. He remembered details of many conversations with him. He seemed to see his smile, the mask of brightness which glittered all day between his lips and his eyes and was dimmed, presumably, only when he slept.

He recalled the Vizier's assurances, right up to the last moment, of his love for France and his regard for Frenchman. And now, in the light of this parting, he considered their sincerity. He seemed to see clearly the Vizier's motives, which were pure and quite divorced from the common run of professional compliments. He seemed to grasp, in general, how and why foreigners loved France, the French way of life and French ideas. They love them by the law of opposites: they love in them everything which they cannot find in their own country and for which their spirit has an irresistible need; they love them, and rightly, as an image of rounded beauty and of ordered, reasonable living, which no momentary obscurations can alter or deform and which after every flood and every eclipse shows itself afresh to the world as an indestructible force and an eternal joy. They love them even when they know them only superficially, a little, or even not at all. And there will always be many to love them, often from the most contrary motives and impulses, because people will never cease to seek and desire something higher and

better than destiny gives them. Look, even, at him himself, thinking of France, not as his own native land which he knew well and had always known and in which he had seen both evil and good, but of France as a wonderful far-off country of order and perfection of which men dream for ever in the midst of coarseness and savagery. So long as Europe exists, France too can never cease to be, unless in a certain sense (that is, in the sense of a brilliant order and perfection) all Europe becomes one France. But that is not possible. Men are too different, too strange and too remote from one another.

Here Daville remembered from somewhere an experience of his with the Vizier last summer. The lively, inquisitive Vizier had kept on putting questions about French life and one day he had also said to him that he had heard a great deal of the French theatre and would like to hear something of what was staged in France even if he could not see the real theatre.

Excited by this request, Daville had come the very next day with the second volume of Racine's works under his arm, resolved to read the Vizier a few scenes from *Bajazet*. After coffee and pipes had been served, all the servants withdrew except Davna, who was to translate. The Consul explained to the Vizier as best he could what a theatre was, what it looked like and what were the aim and the intention of the actor's art. Then he began to read the scene which relates how Bajazet entrusts Amurath with the care of the Sultana Roxana. The Vizier frowned, but listened further to Davna's insipid rendering and the Consul's feeling declamation. But when he came to the scene between the Sultana and the Grand Vizier, Mehmed Pasha discontinued the reading with a charming smile and a drooping of the hands.

"He does not know what he is talking about," said the Vizier serenely and contemptuously. "So long as the world and time go on, it has never been, and never can be possible for a Grand Vizier to burst into the Harem and converse with the Sultanas."

Thereupon the Vizier laughed loud and heartily, not hiding his disillusionment and his failure to understand the point and value of such mental recreation. He said as much openly, almost rudely, with complete disregard for a man of a different civilization.

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In vain did Daville, disagreeably nettled, insist upon expounding to him the meaning of tragedy and the idea of poetry. The Vizier waved his hand inexorably.

"We, we too, have different kinds of dervishes and preachers who recite melodious verses: we give them alms but we never dream of equating them with people of employment and standing. No, no, I don't understand."

Daville had then remembered this episode as something wounding and unpleasant, as one of his private failures. Now, with the passing of time, he looked back on it all in a calmer, gentler light, as a man looks back on the ridiculous situations which caused him disproportionate and unnecessary bitterness in his childhood. He only marvelled that at a moment like this he should remember such trifles rather than the many grave and weighty matters which he had treated with Mehmed Pasha.

Now, returning along the snowy highway to the snowbound town, after taking leave of the Vizier, everything seemed to him rational, comprehensible and logical. The misunderstandings seemed natural and the failures unavoidable. Even the painful parting with Mehmed Pasha now distressed him in a different way. The loss still appeared to him as serious as ever. He felt afraid of new obstacles and new failures. But everything that had taken place today seemed dim and far off, yet inescapably part, as it were, of a life in which, by some mysterious reckoning, one may both lose and gain by the way.

With these thoughts which struck him as new and unusual, but for the moment consoling, he arrived quickly at Travnik before dark.

The departure of Husrev Mehmed Pasha was the sign for a riot among the Travnik Moslems. No one doubted any longer that the Vizier had cunningly and maliciously eluded the wrath of the bazaar. It was known, further, that the French Consul had seen him on his way, which gave rise to yet further indignation.

It then became apparent what was meant by a riot in a Moslem bazaar in a Bosnian town and what such a riot could be.

For some years the bazaar had been working and holding its tongue, cursing and scraping, chaffering and accounting, comparing one year with another, and all the while following everything that went on, gathering information, exchanging news

and rumours, passing them on in whispers from shop to shop, avoiding any conclusion or any expression of a personal view. In this way, slowly and insensibly a common mind of the bazaar was created and took shape. It was at first no more than a vague, general temper, finding outward expression only in curt gestures and expectorations, which might refer to anything; then, by degrees, it became the kind of opinion which is not kept concealed; last of all it grew to be a hard and definite conviction, which it was no longer necessary to utter aloud and which found expression only in deeds.

United and pervaded by this conviction the bazaar whispered, made ready and waited, as bees wait for swarming time. It is impossible to follow clearly the logic of these bazaar riots. They are blind, insane and generally fruitless, but they have a logic of their own just as they have their own obscure technique, compounded of tradition and impulse. All that can be seen from outside is the way in which they flare up, rage and die away.

One day, which dawns and opens like so many before it, the ancient, sleepy peace of the town is broken, there is a clapping to of shutters and an undertone of banging doors and rattling bolts in the warehouses. All at once the market folk jump up from the places in which they have sat for years without moving, clean, orderly, with their legs crossed, loftily at your service, in their cloth breeches and braided waistcoats and their brightly striped jackets. This ritual movement of theirs and the muffled banging of doors and shutters are enough to send the word through the whole town and neighbourhood:

“The bazaar’s shut.”

Those are fateful, ominous words: their meaning is plain to all.

Then women and the infirm go down into the cellars. The more respectable market-folk retire into their houses ready to defend them and to perish on the threshold. And from cafés and from outlying suburbs the lesser Moslem fry come swarming in, those who have nothing to lose and only in riots or upheavals have anything to gain. For in these, as in all movements and revolutions all over the world, there are those who start and lead the affair and others who realize it and execute it. One or two skirmishers from heaven knows where, dart out in front of this mass. They are generally loud, violent, discontented underdogs

and misfits whom nobody has ever known or noticed before and who, when the riot subsides, will disappear once more into their nameless poverty in the hillside suburb from which they emerged, or will lie champing in some police station.

It lasts a day, or two, three, five days, according to the time and place, until something has been destroyed or burned, until human blood has been shed, until the riot no longer has any heart in it or until it collapses of itself.

Then one by one the shops reopen, the crowd begins to clear, and the market-people, as if exhausted and ashamed, resume their work and their daily life, pale and glum.

This, in a general characterization, is the beginning, development and end of a riot in one of our towns. It was so in the present case. Like every Moslem notable in Bosnia, the bazaar at Travnik had for years followed the attempts of Selim III to resettle the Turkish Empire on new foundations, in accordance with the demands and needs of contemporary European life. The bazaar did not conceal its mistrust and hatred of the Sultan's efforts and frequently expressed them both in the direct representations which it addressed to Constantinople and also in its relations with the Sultan's representative, the Vizier at Travnik. To them it was clear that reform could only assist foreign interests to undermine the Empire and destroy it from within, and in its ultimate consequences it could only mean for the Islamic world, and therefore for each of them personally, the loss of faith, possessions, family and life in this world, and damnation in eternity.

As soon as it was known that the Vizier had left, ostensibly for the Serbian frontier, that he was taking stock of events and of the situation, there set in that ominous silence which precedes eruptions of popular anger and that conspiracy of looks and whispers began which is quite unintelligible to an outsider. The riot was ready to be touched off and only awaited its appointed moment.

As usual the actual cause of the explosion was incidental and trivial. Cesare Davna had in his service as runner and confidential agent a certain Mehmed, known as Whiskers, a broad-shouldered, well-grown Herzegovinian. All those who served in the foreign Consulates were detested by the local Moslems,

but this Mehmed particularly so. Mehmed had married that winter a young and beautiful Moslem girl who had come from a Belgrade family to Travnik. The young woman had been married in Belgrade to a certain Bekri Mustapha who kept a café in a log hut at Dorcole. Four witnesses, all witnesses from Travnik, had attested on oath that Bekri Mustapha had died of excessive drinking and that his wife was a free woman. Thereupon the Cadi had remarried the woman to Mehmed.

As it happened, about the time of the Vizier's departure, this Bekri Mustapha suddenly reappeared in Travnik, a confirmed drunkard undoubtedly, but alive and looking for his wife. The Cadi at first rebuffed him, since he was drunk and had no papers. The coffee-house keeper explained that he had spent eleven days over the journey from Belgrade to Travnik, through snowdrifts and in bitter cold and that he had been obliged on that account to drink so much brandy that he found it quite impossible to sober down. He asked for no more than his rights — the return of the wife whom another man had married by trickery.

The bazaar took a hand. Everyone felt that this was an excellent chance to take it out of the detested Mehmed and his master Davna and the Consuls and Consulates in general. Everyone looked upon it as a duty to help an honest Moslem in the defence of his rights and against these foreigners and their lackeys. And Bekri Mustapha, who had gone in the depths of winter without a cloak or a decent pair of shoes, as bare as a skewer, who had only kept warm with the aid of brandy and had lived on onions, was now suddenly overwhelmed with warm clothes and plied with food and drink by the entire bazaar. Somebody even presented him with a wrap, with some mangy fox round the neck, which he wore with much distinction. Belching and blinking, he proceeded in this state from shop to shop, borne aloft like a banner on the general pity and regard, and claiming his rights more loudly and insistently than ever before. He did not in fact sober down but that was quite unnecessary for the defence of his rights, since the bazaar had taken his case into its own hands.

When the Cadi decisively refused to return the woman to a drunken man on his bare word, the bazaar blew up. The long awaited riot had at last found its *casus belli* and could now openly break forth and flow on unimpeded. And break forth

it did, although winter days are not really suited for these events, which usually take place in the summer or autumn.

None of the foreigners could possibly have dreamed what that mass hysteria would be like, which from time to time seizes the entire population of these small towns lost and cramped among high mountains: nor had they any idea of the lengths to which it could go. Even to Davna himself, who knew the East but did not as yet know Bosnia, this was a revelation and it caused him, at times, some anxiety. Daville shut himself up in the Consulate with his family, awaiting the worst.

On that winter's day, one hour before noon, the bazaar shut, as at some invisible, secret sign. There followed the banging of shutters, doors and bolts, which resounded like the rumbling and rattling of a summer storm with its thunder and hail, as if avalanches of stones were pelting down the hill slopes of Travnik from every side, with a roar like thunder, and were threatening to crush the town and every living creature in it.

In the quiet which succeeded immediately after, a few shots and savage cries rang out; thereafter, first with murmuring, then with a subdued roaring, a crowd of the lesser fry began to assemble, lads and half-grown youths. When the mob had grown to two or three hundred voices, they started to move, hesitatingly at first, then swiftly and decidedly, towards the French Consulate. They brandished sticks and waved their arms. Their shouts were chiefly directed against the Cadi who had given Bekri Mustapha's wife in marriage and was known in other respects as a supporter of Selim's reforms and as the Vizier's man.

A completely unknown individual with long moustaches called out in a loud voice that it was owing to such people that a time had come when true-believers did not dare lift their heads and their children were starving. He uttered coarse abuse against the detested Mehmed, who served the infidel and ate pork, and added that they should at once lay hands on him and clap him into the same irons as the Cadi who took true Moslems' wives away from them and married them to other men for money and who was in truth not a Cadi at all but a renegade, worse than any priest. A little yellow man, normally a humble, timorous tailor from the lower market, whom no one had ever heard utter a word even in his own house, after listening attentively to his

mustachioed comrade, suddenly shut his eyes, raised his head aloft and gave vent with unexpected force to a wild hoarse cry, as if in revenge for his long silence:

"To hell with the priest-Cadi!"

This emboldened the rest and shouts and insults began to be heard against the Cadi, the Vizier, the Consulates and, especially, Mehmed Whiskers. Timid young men, after slowly working themselves up and whispering as if they were rehearsing a part, would then dart forward, lift their heads excitedly as if they were going to sing, and utter some slogan which they had long been meditating. Then, blushing with shyness and excitement, they listened to the echo, strong or feeble, of their own cry in the muttering and cheering of the mob. In this way they mutually encouraged and roused one another and the exultant feeling gripped them more and more that, within the limits of the riot, everyone was free to shout or do whatever he liked and to give free vent to whatever was oppressing or hurting him.

Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak, the Deputy Vizier, who knew well the significance and the usual course of a Travnik riot, and had not lost sight of his responsibility towards the Consulate, took what was the most sensible step in such an emergency. He ordered the arrest of the Consular servant Mehmed and shut him up in the citadel.

The mob which assembled before the Consulate was annoyed to find that as the building was surrounded by a wide courtyard and a large garden, the house was not even within a stone's throw. It so happened that while the crowd was hesitating what to do, somebody shouted that they were taking Mehmed away by the side streets. The mob swarmed up the hill and arrived at a run at the bridge in front of the citadel. Mehmed had already been taken inside and the great iron gates had been closed behind him. Here confusion ensued. The majority began to return into the town, singing, but a few continued to stand before the fortifications, looking in at the windows of the gate tower, waiting for something to happen and proposing, with loud shouts, the most drastic penalties and tortures for the man under arrest.

The empty bazaar — as empty as if it had been swept by a whirlwind — filled with the murmurs and cries of the rabble, which was only outwardly satisfied with the arrest of Mehmed.

Suddenly these too were silent, to be followed by an exchange of shouts and glances. Heads began to peep inquisitively on every side. The mob was at that moment of boredom and exhaustion when it would be ready to accept any change or diversion, whether vicious and bloody or good-humoured and sportive. Finally, all eyes concentrated on the steep street which leads from the French Consulate to the bazaar.

From this street, through the ranks of the crowd, Davna appeared, formal and well-armed, on his tall, bay Arab mare. Everyone stood rooted with astonishment to the spot where he happened to be and gazed at this horseman who rode as calmly and nonchalantly along as if there were a troop of cavalry behind him. If only one of the crowd had shouted something, they would all have begun to cry out and there would have ensued a din and confusion, in which stones would certainly have flown. The mob would have poured like water over horse and rider alike. But everyone wanted to see what this bold Consular dragoman wanted and where he was going to, and only then to pursue him with demonstrative shouts or gestures. The consequence was that no one uttered a single cry and people simply stood expectant, with no will of their own and no definite objective. Davna, on the other hand, called out gruffly and sharply, as only a Levantine can, moving alternately to left and right as if he were herding a bunch of cattle. He was deathly pale. His eyes were blazing and his lips were set from ear to ear.

"Has a snake bitten you? What do you mean by touching the Imperial French Consulate?" he shouted, looking straight at those who were nearest him. And he went on:

"Why have you risen against us, your best friends? You can only have been put up to it by some idiot who has drunk his brains away in Bosnian brandy. Don't you know that the new Sultan and the French Emperor are the greatest of friends and that orders have already come from Stamboul that everyone is to respect the French Consul and honour him as a Guest of the State?"

Somebody in the crowd mumbled something unintelligible, but the mob did not catch it and Davna took advantage of the fact. Concentrating on the one isolated voice, he turned in that direction, talking only to it as if everyone else were on his side and he were speaking in their name.



“What? What do you mean? Is it for you to wreck and ruin what Emperors have arranged and concluded between themselves? Very well then, let us know who it is who is plunging peaceful folk into disaster. You must all know that the Sultan will not allow it and that the whole of Bosnia will be burnt if anything happens to our Consulate. Not even babes in the cradle will be spared.”

Again a few voices were raised, but they were subdued and single. The crowd gave way before the horseman who seemed to have not a thought that anything might happen to him. In this way he rode the whole length of the bazaar, shouting angrily that he was going to ask Suleiman Pasha who was master here, and that afterwards, they might rest assured, a good many people would be sorry for what had been done by a few hotheads against instructions from the highest quarters.

Davna forced his way over the bridge. The furrow which had opened in the crowd behind him closed up, but the mob felt itself beaten and tamed, at least for the moment. And now they all began to ask themselves why they had let this infidel ride boldly and freely right through them, why they had not squashed him like a bug. But now it was too late. The moment had slipped by. The first impetus had been lost, people were confused and aimless. It would have to be started all over again.

Taking advantage of the momentary confusion and cowardice of the mob, Davna repeated his feat of daring and rode slowly back to the Consulate. He no longer shouted and merely glared challengingly about him, shaking his head ominously and menacingly, like a man who has settled the matter at the Residency and knows exactly what is in store for them.

Actually Davna's attempt to talk rather sharply and loftily to Suleiman Pasha had not been a success. The Deputy Vizier had not allowed himself to be roused or alarmed by Davna's threats, any more than by the riot in Travnik. Just as he had in his deliberate way defended the Travnik winter to the Vizier and had shown that it was not a calamity at all but a necessary gift of God, so he now talked of the riot after the same manner. It was nothing, he sent word to Daville, the people had risen, there was a high tide running. That sort of thing happened from time to time. They would shout and yell, and then calm down

and no one was ever hurt by a few shouts. Nobody would dare to touch the Consulate. The affair of the lad Mehmed was a matter for the Moslem courts; it would be gone into and if he were guilty, he would be sentenced and would have to return the woman: if he were not guilty, nothing would happen to him. All the rest would be dealt with according to custom, in due order and in the due place.

This was the message Suleiman Pasha sent Daville, speaking slowly in his halting Turkish, with a coarse accent and a number of unintelligible provincialisms. With Davna himself he had no wish to go into details, however much the interpreter tried to spur him on. He dismissed him like a Turkish servant, with the words:

"Very well. I have said this to you so that you may bear it well in mind and translate it exactly to the honourable Consul."

Nevertheless, the riot continued to spread. Nothing availed against it, neither Davna's boldness nor Suleiman Pasha's Turkish way of trying to make light of it or to cover it up.

On the evening of that day a still larger and unrulier mob issued from the slums and poured through the bazaar to the cries of the half-grown youths. During the night certain doubtful characters came up to the Consulate. The dogs barked and the Consular servants were on guard. Next day some hemp and tar were found, with which it had been intended to set fire to the Consulate building.

The following day Davna, with the same audacity, tried and actually managed to gain admission to the citadel to visit the servant who was shut up there. He found him tied up in a dark cell, known as The Well, into which they lower those who are condemned to death. The young man was in truth more dead than alive, since the chief of police, not knowing the real reason for his arrest, had ordered him a hundred strokes of the bastinado, to make sure. Davna did not succeed in rescuing the wretched man but found a way to bribe the warder and to relieve his bondage.

To increase Daville's distress still further, two French officers happened to arrive in Travnik just at this time, on their way from Split to Constantinople; for although the dispatch of these officers had long become not only useless but harmful and

although Daville had been entreating for months that men should not be sent, or at least not sent by way of Bosnia, where they aroused the hatred and suspicion of the people, it still happened from time to time that two or three officers set off in compliance with some out-of-date order.

The riot confined these officers, like everyone else, to the Consulate building. But being reckless, fiery and impatient, they tried on the first day to ride out into the outskirts of the town, disregarding the riot. As soon as they had got clear of the Consulate and were skirting the slums, snowballs began to fly after them. The urchins of the town ran behind them as they rode and pelted them harder and harder. Ragamuffins darted out from every gateway, with flushed faces and fierce looks, howling and crying:

"Ha, the Christian! Hit him!"

"Hit the Giaour!"

"Your money or your life, you filthy Christian!"

The officers saw them run to the spring and dip their snowballs in the water to make them heavier. They were in a quandary, since it would be equally unseemly for them either to turn their horses' heads and make off, or to fight with children or to bear their savage insults meekly. They went back to the Consulate, furious and humiliated. And while the shouts of the mob floated up from the bazaar, a sapper major, shut up in the Consulate, wrote his report to headquarters at Split:

"So far all is well," the major wrote, "as there has been snow. Otherwise these savages would have pelted us with stones and mud. I was seething with shame and rage and when the ridiculousness of the situation became more than I could bear, I laid about me among the rascals with my crop. They scattered for a moment but immediately afterwards closed again and began to pursue us with still louder cries. We barely got back to the town. The interpreter at the Consulate assures me that it was a piece of luck that my crop did not hit a single boy or we might have paid for it with our lives at the hands of the older men, who are no better and who even put their rascally brats up to it."

Daville tried to explain the affair to the officers but he was himself racked with shame at having Frenchmen as witnesses of the impotence and humiliation in which he lived.

On the third day the bazaar reopened. One by one, the shopkeepers arrived, raised their shutters, sat down in their places and resumed work. They all looked somehow more crouched and sullen, pale and a little ashamed, like men after a night out.

It was a sign that things were quietening down. The idlers and the urchins had gone to ground once more, and lounged about the town, blowing their frozen fingers. At times somebody would shout some offensive slogan or other, but their cries remained without an echo. As yet no one had come out of the Consulate except Davna and the most indispensable of the servants. They were pursued with threats, snowballs and a few random shots; but the riot was approaching its natural close. The French Consul had been shown what people thought of him and of his residence in Travnik. Davna's hated servant was sentenced. The woman who was taken from him was not returned to Bekri Mustapha but sent back to her family: and Bekri Mustapha himself at once lost all value in the eyes of the bazaar. No one so much as looked at him. As if they had just come to their senses, people asked who this drunken tramp was and what he was doing here. Nobody let him come near their counters or warm himself at their braziers. He lived in this wretched state for a few days, selling bit by bit for brandy the clothes which people had given him in their first excitement. Then he disappeared from Travnik for ever.

So the riot ended of its own accord. But the difficulties with which the Consulate had to contend remained no less: on the contrary, they increased and multiplied. Daville met them at every turn.

Mehmed Whiskers was eventually released from prison, but weak with chastisement and embittered by the loss of his wife. Suleiman Pasha had indeed, in response to Daville's sharp protests, told the chief of police to go and make his excuses to the Consul for the arrest of his servant, the insulting cries against the French and the attack on the Consulate building, but the chief of police, who was a stubborn and proud old man, announced firmly that he would leave the service first and, if necessary, give the head off his shoulders, rather than go to the infidel Consul and beg his pardon. And there the matter rested.

All the rest of the Consulate staff were frightened by the example of Mehmed Whiskers. In the streets they encountered looks of hatred. The shopkeepers refused to sell them anything. The Albanian kavass, Hussein, who was proud of his employment, went through the bazaar pale with rage, stopping before one shop after another: but whatever he demanded, the Turk at the counter replied with a scowl that he had none. The goods asked for were often hanging there within reach, but when the kavass went on to point this out, the shopkeeper either answered placidly that they were already sold or else flared up.

"When I tell you there's none, there's none — none for you."

Things were got secretly from the Catholics and Jews.

Daville felt the hatred against himself and the Consulate growing daily. He seemed to see this hatred sweeping him out of Travnik one day. It robbed him of sleep, paralyzed his will-power and nipped every resolution in the bud. All the servants felt themselves powerless, persecuted and inadequately protected against the general hate. Only an innate feeling of shame and of attachment to good masters prevented them from leaving the detested service of the Consulate. Davna alone remained unshakable and imperturbably cool. This hatred which gathered thicker and thicker round the isolated Travnik Consulate neither perturbed nor frightened him. He remained immovably true to his principle, that one must pay court, persistently and without scruple, to the powerful minority at the head of things and show the rest of the world only contempt and a strong hand, since the Turks fear only him who is not afraid and they pay heed solely to the man who is stronger than they are. An inhuman life of this kind was entirely suited to Davna's ideas and habits.

9

**W**orn out by the efforts which the events of these last few months had required of him, dissatisfied with the lack of understanding and the inadequate support he received from Paris, from General Marmont at Split and from the Ambassador at Constantinople, disturbed by the illwill and mistrust with which the

Moslems of Traynik followed his every step and, generally speaking, every move from the French side, Daville felt more and more heavily the loss of Mehmed Pasha. Distracted and isolated, he began to see everything in a special light and from an unaccustomed angle. Everything somehow became larger than life, vitally important, irremediably difficult, almost tragic. In the recall of the late Vizier, "the friend of the French", he saw not only a personal setback of his own but a proof of the weakness of French influence at Constantinople and a substantial failure of French policy.

For his own part, Daville had come to regret more and more that he had ever taken on this appointment which was clearly as exacting a post as anyone could wish to avoid. He especially regretted having brought his family. He saw that he had both been deceived and had deceived himself, and that in all probability he would forfeit in this place both his own reputation and the health of his wife and children. He felt himself harried and impotent at every step; he felt, equally, that he could expect no good and no comfort from the future.

Everything he had so far been able to hear or gather about the new Vizier disquieted and alarmed him. Ibrahim Halimi Pasha was, it is true, one of Selim III's men; he had even at one time been his Grand Vizier. But he had not himself been a particular enthusiast for the reforms, and still less was he a particular friend of the French. He was well known for his unconditional and total devotion to Selim; it was, indeed, the one thing that was known about him. Since Selim's dethronement he too had been, they said, more dead than alive, and the new government of Sultan Mustapha had first sent him as Vali to Salonica, and immediately after that to Bosnia, rather like a corpse being hustled out of view. He was, the rumour went, a man of aristocratic origin and mediocre abilities, who was now completely shattered by his recent fall from power and indignant at the unenviable post to which they were sending him. What could Daville expect for the French cause and what could he hope for himself from a Vizier like this, when even the active and ambitious Mehmed Pasha had been unable to get anything done? So Daville awaited the new Vizier with trepidation, as one more affliction in the long series of afflictions which his Consulship in Bosnia had brought upon him.

Ibrahim Pasha arrived at the beginning of March, with a whole throng of staff and a caravan of baggage. His harem had been left at Constantinople. As soon as he was installed and rested, the new Vizier received the Consuls in solemn audience.

Daville was received first.

This time too he did not pass on his way without threats and abuse as he made his ceremonial progress through the town. Daville had prepared his young Vice-Consul for this. But there was much less of it and it was all much milder than the first time. A few audible spittings, a few menacing or dubious gestures were the sole expressions of the general hatred towards the Consulates. With malicious satisfaction Daville saw that his Austrian adversary, who was received next day, had no better reception at the hands of the Moslem common folk.

The ceremonial with which Daville was received at the Residency was the same as under the former Vizier. The presents were richer and the entertainment more lavish. The new writer to the Consulate received an ermine jacket, while Daville this time was hung about with sable. But what mattered particularly to Daville was that the new Vizier detained him in conversation a good half hour longer than he did the Austrian Consul on the following day.

In other respects, the new Vizier was a genuine surprise for Daville, both in his manner and his whole appearance. It was as if Fate had wanted to play a trick on the Consul by sending him the exact opposite of Mehmed Pasha, with whom he had worked so easily and amicably, though not always successfully. (Isolated Consuls easily come to think of themselves not only as abandoned by their governments and harassed by their opponents but also as men on whom Destiny has, so to speak, pounced with special malignity.) Instead of a young, alert and friendly Georgian, Daville had found himself confronted at the Divan by a heavy, immobile, cold Ottoman Turk, whose exterior frightened and repelled. Conversations with Mehmed Pasha, even if they did not always yield what they promised, had nevertheless left the Consul with a certain sensation of cheerfulness and co-operation and of readiness to hold further conversations. With this Ibrahim Pasha it seemed as if every conversation were bound to infect one with surliness, heaviness and quiet despair.

The Pasha was a perambulating ruin — a ruin without beauty or grandeur, or to be exact with a certain ghastly grandeur. If the dead could move, they might perhaps fill the living with more terror and astonishment but not with more of that cold horror which rivets the eye and stifles speech and from which the hand itself involuntarily draws back. The Vizier had, a broad, bloodless face, with a few scattered, but deep, wrinkles; he had a thin beard which was likewise in its way colourless, like grass that had long been dead, flattened and bleached, in the crevices of a cliff. His face was strangely set off by a huge turban which came down to his eyebrows and over his ears. This turban was cunningly rolled of the finest tissue, white with gleams of rose, adorned only with his aigrette of honour, which was attached by a golden chain and threads of green silk. And this turban was strangely rammed down on his head as if another's hand had placed it, at random and in the dark, on a dead man who would never again adjust it or take it off, since it was decreed that it should be buried and decay with him. All the rest of the man, from top to toe, was a single block, in which it was hard to distinguish the hands, the feet and the trunk. It was impossible to judge what sort of a body it was which lived under this pile of clothing, under the cloth, and fur, and silk, the silver and the cord. It might be slender and feeble: it might equally well be big and strong. And what was strangest of all, this weighty mass of apparel and ornament had, in the rare moments when it moved, something unexpectedly rapid and powerful in its movements, as of an alert, younger man. And all the while the huge, withered, deathly face remained motionless and without expression. It looked as if this corpselike form in the stiff heap of clothing was moved from within by invisible springs and works.

All this, taken together, gave the Vizier a ghostly look and filled his visitor with mixed emotions of fear and aversion, of pity and uneasiness.

Such was the impression which the person of the new Vizier left on the Consul at their first meeting.

In the course of time, by living and working with Ibrahim Pasha, Daville was to grow accustomed to him, was actually to become friendly with him, and was to see that under his strange exterior there was hidden a man not lacking in heart or intelligence,



who was permanently and utterly unhappy but was not inaccessible to all the nobler feelings which his race and his caste recognized and allowed. But now, judging from his first impression, Daville took a sombre view of his future collaboration with this new Vizier, who looked so like a scarecrow, but rather a luxurious one, not suitable for the poverty-stricken fields of this country, — a scarecrow erected in some land of fantasy to scare away birds of Paradise, of exotic colour and form.

In the turmoil at the Residency Daville noticed many more new and strange faces. Davna, who no longer had free entry there as in Mehmed Pasha's day, since he had transferred completely to the French Consul's service, nevertheless in time found contacts and ways of informing himself about everything, about the Vizier, the leading personalities, the relations between them and the manner in which the more important offices were discharged.

From natural keenness, from curiosity and idleness, and in some respects from an unconscious desire to outlive in this the old Royal ambassadors whose reports he loved to read, Daville endeavoured to penetrate the private life of the Vizier and the intimacies of his household and to discover, according to the precepts of the old diplomacy, "the temperament, habits, passions and inclinations of the ruler to whom he is accredited", so that he might more easily acquire influence and forward his own desires and purposes.

Davna, who regretted having to live in this Bosnian wilderness, instead of at an Embassy or in the service of some Vizier at Constantinople, which would have matched better with his abilities or with his own conception of them, might have been created to discover and impart all these details. With the forwardness of a Levantine, the conscientiousness of a doctor and the agility of a Piedmontese, he managed to find out everything and to retail it drily, factually and in full, with details which the Consul found sometimes interesting and invariably useful, but often painful and revolting.

Just as there were no resemblances between the two Viziers, so their coadjutors were completely different. The people whom Mehmed Pasha had brought and had taken away with him had been mainly rather young men, all more or less soldiers by

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In short, Davna did not much exaggerate when, with his knowing smile, he described the new Vizier's Residency, in his reports to Daville, as being "a museum of curiosities."

All these people the Vizier meekly received, endured and dragged along with him. With superstitious resignation he bore with their weaknesses, and with their intestine broils and jangles, quarrels and feuds.

Even those who occupied the higher posts and discharged the real duties were mostly eccentrics: in few cases were they normal, everyday people. The first among them, both in importance and in the influence which he had on affairs was the Vizier's secretary, Tahir Beg, a man in Ibrahim Pasha's inner confidence and his prime counsellor in all matters. He was a sickly and eccentric but high-principled man of unusual intelligence. Opinions were divided about him both in the town and in the Residency itself, but it was never doubted — and in this the townsfolk and Consuls were agreed — that Tahir Beg was the brains of the Residency and "the Vizier's right hand and the pen in his fingers."

As happens with every senior Ottoman official, so in his case too his fame had preceded him, distorted and magnified on the way. The Ulema of Travnik, who were as numerous as they were full of envy, maliciously gnawed their moustaches and consoled themselves with the thought that he too was only a man and that it is only the heavens above us to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken away. And indeed, before Tahir Beg was halfway to Bosnia, they had managed both to add to and to subtract from his reputation. One of those who had come from Stamboul and had told tales of Tahir Beg's learning and understanding had said that in the schools they still called him "The Well of Knowledge". At Travnik he was at once nicknamed "Dr. Well".

That is just like the Agas and notables of Travnik, especially the men of light and learning. For everything they have not got, do not know about or cannot do themselves, they are able to find a wicked word or a disparaging name. In this way they manage to take some part in everything, even in the highest matters, in which otherwise they could never share.

But when Tahir Beg reached Travnik, this derisory nickname could not be made to stick among the people at large. It recoiled

profession, in any case, all good horsemen and hunters. There had been no remarkable personalities amongst them who stood out from the rest or particularly took the eye for their qualities of body or mind, good or bad. They had all been youngish, active, mediocre men, devoted without reserve to Mehmed Pasha and obedient to him, but they had all resembled one another, much like the Vizier's thirty-two Mamelukes who were like toys with expressionless faces, all of the same appearance and height.

Ibrahim Pasha's household were quite another matter. They were more plentiful in number and more various in character and appearance. Davna himself, for whom the Turkish world held few secrets, sometimes asked himself in surprise where the Vizier could have picked up this extraordinary collection, why it was he dragged them round the world and how he managed to maintain them all. Ibrahim Pasha was not, like most Viziers, a parvenu of unknown origin. Both his father and his grandfather had been high dignitaries and men of wealth. There had therefore accumulated in his family a throng of slaves, confidants, *protégés* and servitors, adopted followers, dependants and relations of uncertain and ill-defined degree, hangers-on and parasites of every type. In the course of his long and changeful life and service the Vizier had made use of all kinds of people for a variety of purposes, and especially at the time when he was Selim III's Grand Vizier. Most of these people had never left him, not even when the purpose for which they had been taken on had long ago ceased to exist; instead they had stuck to the Vizier like barnacles to an old ship, and continued in their attachment to the Vizier's fortunes, or more exactly, to his kitchen and his counting-house. Some of them were infirm old men who never emerged to the light of day and had to be waited on in their little boxes of rooms somewhere in the depths of the Residency. At some time they had been in Ibrahim Pasha's pay and had done him some substantial service, which the Vizier had long forgotten and they themselves only faintly remembered. Others were young and sturdy, but unemployed and without any definite occupation. Some of them had been born in the Vizier's household, since their fathers had been in his service; they had grown up there and would spend their lives there without any visible cause or justification. There were also a few brazen spongers and the usual begging dervishes.

It is true that among the myriad employments in Ibrahim Pasha's household there was also a post of doctor to the Vizier, which was filled; but it was filled by the aged and witty Eshrev Effendi who had forgotten anything he had ever known, let alone the art of medicine with which he had never at any time had a very close connexion. In his youth he had been something of an apothecary, but he had passed half his life in the army, on battle-fields and in camps, where he "cured" more by the influence of his joviality and insuperable good will than by medicaments or professional skill. Ibrahim Pasha had long ago taken him from the army and carried him round everywhere with him, more as an agreeable companion than as a physician. Having once been a passionate sportsman, particularly after wild duck, he was now almost entirely incapacitated by rheumatism in his legs and mostly sat in the sun or in a warm room, always in boots with high cloth tops. He was a lively man, witty and trenchant but loved and respected by all.

Naturally, Tahir Beg never dreamed of placing himself in the hands of this Eshrev Effendi with whom, nevertheless, he loved to joke and chat. Broad and narrow bandages, cotton wool, lotions and plasters were always kept ready and carefully assembled in a private chest. It was a finely wrought and cunningly made box of a good and rare wood which steadily improves the older it grows and the longer it is in use. In this box Tahir Beg's grandfather used to keep his manuscripts; his father had kept money in it; and he, in his turn, kept medicines and bandages.

On the days when he was in pain the Secretary had boiling hot water specially prepared for him every morning at the same hour. He then began, painfully, lengthily, almost religiously, bathing, cleansing and bandaging. Shut up by himself, with his chin stiffly drawn in and his eyebrows knitted, he carefully washed his sore and changed the dressings and the bandages—a process which often lasted hours. These were hidden and painful hours of the Secretary's life: but in them all his distresses and resentments remained buried in a common grave, never to be given utterance. When at last he had finished bandaging, tying, lacing and dressing, the Secretary emerged into the world tranquil and forceful, completely transformed. His commanding eyes burned in his cold, impassive face and the thin lips could scarcely

on the Ulema who had been too prompt to invent it. Before the personality of the new Secretary every insult and every thought of ridicule died of itself. After a few weeks people already called him simply "The Doctor" pronouncing that common word with respect and special emphasis. So it came about that while there were many doctors at Travnik, literate and semi-literate scribes, Hafizes, Muallims and Hodjas, there was only one "The Doctor".

Learning, the knowledge of foreign languages and skill in calligraphy were tradional in Tahir Beg's family. His grandfather had been a writer of dictionaries and commentaries, his father had been first secretary to the Porte and had ended his life as Foreign Minister (Reis Effendi). Tahir Beg would have followed his father, had it not been for the insurrection which overthrew Sultan Selim and drove the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, first to Salonica, then to Travnik.

Tahir Beg was already past his thirty-fifth year but looked much older. From being a precocious boy he had become, almost without transition, a sickly, heavy, prematurely aged man, living and working as such. Now, after all he had been through with Ibrahim Pasha while the latter was Grand Vizier in the most difficult of times, and as the result of an illness which made increasing inroads upon his otherwise strong and compact frame, he had already become a chronic invalid whose movements were sluggish and slow but from whom there radiated visibly the will to live and an uncommon strength of spirit. Had he understood how to live a little more moderately or had he been willing to leave his work, his Constantinople doctor might in the early stages perhaps have cured him. Now the rare disease had established itself as inveterate, and Tahir Beg had resigned himself to living and suffering alongside it. He had a raw wound in his left flank which closed and reopened once or twice every year. This doubled him up and made him deliberate in his gait. In winter and at the time of the thaw he was troubled with pains and insomnia: he was then obliged to strengthen his doses of alcohol and sleeping draught.

After he was left without his Constantinople doctor, Tahir Beg saw to his sores and bandaged them himself, so that he generally managed to suffer in secret and in peace, without complaining and without putting anyone else out.

indispensable to the Vizier more from habit than from necessity. Although he never admitted this even to himself, the Vizier, who otherwise only liked peaceable and liberal men, kept him on and endured having this spiteful character at his side from some kind of superstitious impulse, as if he were some sort of charm which attracted all hatred and all evil to itself from near and far. He was, as Tahir Beg said, "the Vizier's house snake".

Unmarried and friendless, Baki had now directed the keeping of the Vizier's accounts for years, faithfully and accurately after his own fashion, saving every farthing with the stubbornness of a miserly maniac and guarding it from every hand, even that of the Vizier himself. His life, which in sober truth lacked all personal happiness or enjoyment, was entirely devoted to selfish adoration of himself and to the struggle against expenditure of any kind in any place and on any object. Infinitely and savagely malicious, he in fact derived no tangible profit from his malice, since, excepting only malice for its own sake, he asked nothing at all of life.

He was a short, stout man, without beard or moustaches, with a yellow, thin, transparent skin, which looked as if it were filled out, not with bones and muscles but with some colourless liquid or with air. His yellow cheeks were shrunken and deeply pouched, like two bags. Above them swam two shifty eyes, of a clear blue like the eyes of a small child, but always worried and mistrustful. These eyes never smiled. His coat and shirt were cut low about his neck which was puffy and furrowed in three deep creases like the necks of fat, anaemic women. The whole man had the appearance of an enormous inflated windbag which would collapse with a wheeze if one pricked it with a needle. His entire body shook with its own respiration and shuddered with fright at a touch from anything that was not itself.

He had no notion how to joke or how to relax. He said little, not a word more than he had prepared beforehand and only the minimum he needed to say. He listened and paid rapt attention to anything which concerned himself or what he considered his. Two lives would not have been enough for this occupation. He ate little and only drank water since he had no teeth to chew and no stomach to digest, and the mouthful he saved was sweeter to him than the mouthful he ate. When

be seen to quiver. At such times nothing in the world was too hard or too formidable for him, no questions were insoluble, no men to be feared, no difficulties impossible to overcome. This sore-stricken chronic invalid was stronger than the healthy and abler than the strong.

The feature which betrayed this man's real life and true strength was the eyes. Sometimes the large shining eyes of a great man whom mental force raises above the common; sometimes the liquid, piercing eyes, with golden lights, which one sees in exotic beasts, sables and lynxes, glittering, cold eyes, impersonal and merciless; sometimes the excited, laughing eyes of a headstrong but generous-hearted boy, with the carelessness and the charm which only youth can give. The whole of this man lived in his eyes. His voice was hoarse, his gestures few and slow.

Of all the Vizier's colleagues Tahir Beg had by far the greatest influence on him. His advice was the most often sought and was always listened to. To him were entrusted those grave and vexatious questions, of whose very existence the Vizier's Deputy was often quite unaware. He generally disposed of them swiftly, naturally and easily, in a few words and with those sparkles of gold in his eyes, and he never again returned to the point. He gave liberally and unselfishly of his knowledge and shrewdness, like a man who has plenty to spare and is accustomed to giving, being in lack of nothing. He was equally well versed in Moslem law, in military and in financial matters. He knew Persian and Greek. He wrote a perfect hand and had his own collection of verse which Sultan Selim had known and loved.

Tahir Beg was one of the few Osmanlis in the Residency who never complained of this banishment to Bosnia, of the wildness of the country or the rusticity of the people. Inwardly he longed for Constantinople, being more habituated than any of them to the refinements and enjoyments of metropolitan life. But he hid this nostalgia as he hid his sickness and tended it unseen and alone.

The complete opposite of Tahir Beg and his irreconcilable and helpless opponent was the Treasurer, Baki, known at the Residency as Kaki. He was a physical and mental monstrosity, a marvellous calculating machine, a man whom everyone hated and who did not even wish it to be otherwise. He had long become



Every living soul at the Residency loathed this Treasurer, and he loathed them all, in common with all the rest of creation. Possessed by a mania for saving and reckoning, he was unwilling to keep an assistant or clerks. All day and every day he spent over his money, muttering as if at prayer, figuring and noting down with a short, blunt pen on odd little scraps of paper. (He filched this paper from the other officials.) He spied on everything in the Residency, beat and dismissed the juniors, loaded the Vizier with informations and calumnies against the senior officials and with entreaties to forbid and check dissipation and loss. He fought against expense and waste, against every satisfaction and every pleasure, one might almost say against every form of activity in general, since he regarded not only light-hearted and carefree, but also talkative and enterprising people as idlers and dangerous spendthrifts. A number of absurd and painful episodes occurred in the course of this battle of his against life itself. He paid spies to report to him in which rooms lights were burning longer than needful, he assessed how much everybody ate or drank, he counted the heads of onion in the garden as soon as they showed above the soil. In reality, all these precautions cost more expense and effort than the loss they prevented would have entailed. (Tahir Effendi said jestingly that Baki's zeal caused the Vizier more loss than the passions and vices of all the rest of his officers put together.) Though stout and short of breath, he was always going down into the cellars or climbing up on to the roof. He inventoried everything, marked everything, kept an eye upon everything. and yet things were always slipping from under it. He waged a desperate war against the natural course of events in life, and he would have been happiest if he could have put out the life of the entire world just as he put out the superfluous candles in people's rooms by snuffing them between his thumb and first finger, if he could have been left solitary in the dark beside this snuffed candle of the world's existence, and if he could have revelled in the thought that all the lights were out everywhere, that at last all life (that is, all expenditure) had ceased and that he was still in existence and breathing as the victor and the witness of his own triumph.

He was peeved with the rich because they had many possessions and spent and squandered. He had a bitter hatred of

he had to eat, he relished every crumb, rolled it round his palate and thought it a rare delicacy, since it was about to become part of his person.

To him it was always winter, no matter where he was or what the season of the year. His sensitive skin and weakly body did not permit of his putting on as many clothes as he required. The feeling of seams and stitching was irritating to him and was capable of exasperating and moving him at times to feel really sorry for himself. All his life long he had been looking for some material that was at once warm and light and soft and he clothed and shod himself after a fashion of his own, loosely, comfortably, simply and without any regard for convention or for the world about him. One of his dreams was a dream of warmth. He dreamed of a room which should be small and unfurnished but heated constantly and evenly by invisible fires from all sides; in addition, it should be always light, clean and full of fresh air. It would be a sort of private chapel, a well warmed tomb, but a tomb from which one could exert a powerful, continuous influence on the outside world, to one's own satisfaction and the undoing of everyone else. For Baki was not simply a ridiculous skinflint and an eccentric egoist, but a libeller, an informer, and a slanderer who had made many a man's life a burden to him and had cost the head of more than one. This had been especially the case in the Treasurer's palmy days, when Ibrahim Pasha was Grand Vizier and Baki himself had been close to persons of importance and at the heart of events. "The man whose plate Baki turns down will never dine again" was what they said of him then. Even now, when he was cast away so far afield, without connections or influence, an ageing man more laughable than dangerous, he continued writing to various personages at Constantinople and, more from evil habit than anything else, informing them of what he thought he had picked up and making hints and insinuations against anyone he could. Even now he could pass the night in this way, humped and crouched over a half sheet of paper, as delightfully as others pass it in merry company or in the transports of love. And all this he did quite naturally, almost always without any personal profit to himself, fulfilling some inner need, without shame, without any pang of conscience, without fear even.

"Spruce, indeed! But where do they get the money for clothes like that, eh? I ask you, where do they get the money from in this clodhopping country town?"

And if his interlocutor pretended not to notice and continued his praises of Travnik and his justification of people's luxurious taste in dress, the Treasurer would fall into a still more flaming passion. His blue eyes, that looked so woebegone yet at the same time so irresistibly comic, suddenly became a stormy violet and glittered with malice. He spun rapidly round on his invisible, tubby little legs, like an ecstatic dervish, and waved his short little arms. Finally he would end up in the middle of his room, with his feet apart, his arms flung wide and his stubby fingers spread out, repeating shrilly and angrily, faster and faster, higher and sharper:

"But the money! the money! where — do — they — get — the — money?"

At this point the scoundrel who had only come to madden and infuriate him would go, leaving the frantic Treasurer unanswered, in the middle of the room, like a man drowning without hope or help in that raging ocean of illimitable expense and inextricable accounts which constitutes this idiotic, unregenerate world.

The one who knew the Treasurer best and could tell the most stories about him was Eshrev Effendi, the Vizier's invalid doctor. It was from him that Davna learned most about the Treasurer.

Sitting in the sun, with his legs stretched out in their cloth-topped boots, and his long, thin hands laid in his lap, a network of veins and scars, Eshrev Effendi talked in his deep, hoarse hunter's voice:

"Yes. Now he's a figure of fun and pretty well played out. A pig wouldn't touch him: but you should have known him once. Even today he shouldn't be underrated. He's yellow and his hand shakes, if you like. That's true enough. But you'd be mistaken if you concluded from that that he hasn't long to live or that he won't be hurtful and dangerous to every living thing about him, as far as he can. Yes, he's as yellow as a sour quince, but he was never anything else: he was born yellow. For more than fifty years he's been creeping about God's world,

those who had nothing, of that black and endless poverty, the dragon with a million insatiable mouths. When, at the Residency, they wanted to make him mad, someone would come to him and in the course of a conversation would say, with a look of exaggerated melancholy and a voice full of regret, that so-and-so wanted looking after, as "he is poor". With the regularity of a machine Baki would leap from his seat, entirely forgetting himself and exclaiming in his reedy voice:

"What do you mean, poor? Why hang on to a pauper like that? Let him alone to sink where he is. Am I God, to turn poor men into rich ones? Even He doesn't do that nowadays. He's sick of it."

Then he would bow his head and mournfully lower his voice, caricaturing the tone of his questioner:

"'He's poor'! Well, what if he is poor? How comes it to be such an honour to be poor nowadays, as if it were a title which conferred some privilege. 'He's poor', they say, as if they were saying 'He's a Hadji' or 'He's a Pasha'."

Then he would raise his voice and foaming with rage, push his face into the other's.

"Why does he eat if he's poor? Nobody gets through more than a poor man. Why doesn't he save?"

He praised the Bosnians because they were simple and thrifty, because they were not impatient in their poverty, because they did not fall upon one with requests like the people of Constantinople or Salonica but were dumb and uncomplaining in their poverty. He did not care for the people of Travnik because he had gathered that they liked finery and that almost everyone dressed well as a matter of course. He saw men wearing broad sashes and baggy trousers covered with silk tassels; he saw women wearing jackets of heavy cloth and veils over their faces embroidered with real gold; and that made him angry, as he tried vainly to explain to himself how all these people came by their money, how they managed to buy such expensive and unnecessary things and however they managed to replace them when they wore out and fell to pieces so fast. Giddiness seized him at the thought of these insoluble calculations. And if, in talking with him, anyone began to defend the people of Travnik and to point out how nice they looked in the bazaar, so spruce and always so well attired, Baki would fly at him:

eyes became all at once a squint and he "saw two shelves at once", as Eshrev Effendi used to say. At the same time he would utter in a low voice, over and over again, the name of the document he was looking for. His voice gradually gathered speed, becoming more and more clipped and indistinct, until it developed into a sustained humming through his nose. Then suddenly this unintelligible droning would stop, the Deputy Secretary would make a dart as if he were catching a bird, and would reach for a shelf with both hands. The paper he was searching for was usually there. If, however, it so happened that it was not, the Deputy Secretary would go back again into the middle of the room and start all over again his inward recollection and the humming through his nose, followed by a fresh dart to another place. And so on, until the thing was found.

The Commander of the Vizier's guard was jolly, feckless Bekhdjet, a man of irrepressible health, a stout, black man, brave enough but an incorrigible dicer and idler. The two units of horse and foot which constituted the Vizier's picturesque bodyguard did not give Bekhdjet much trouble or much work. Generally speaking, they so arranged matters that Bekhdjet paid little heed to them or they to him. They gambled, ate, drank and slept. The chief and the heaviest task of this commander was to do battle with the Treasurer, Baki, whenever it became necessary to extract from him the month's pay or some extraordinary disbursement for himself and his soldiers, without its being refused or delayed. This led to the most astonishing scenes.

By his pinpricking and his malicious manner Baki contrived to rouse even the good-humoured Bekhdjet from his placidity, until he drew his knife and threatened to cut the skinflint of a Treasurer into little pieces "like cat's meat". And Baki, who was normally timid and feeble, would rush upon Bekhdjet's knife in defence of his coffers, blind with the hatred and repulsion which he felt for this spendthrift and swearing that before he died he would see Bekhdjet's head stuck on a pole, on that hill below the graveyard where the severed heads of malefactors are exposed. Finally, it all ended in the Commander's getting the money and emerging from the Treasurer's room laughing loudly, while Baki was left bending over his money-chest, stroking like a wound the gap that had been left in it, and making ready,

coughing, sneezing, groaning, spitting and puffing on all sides like a punctured bagpipe. From the first day when he made his first mess on the mattress on which his mother bore him, he has made a mess of everything round him and he's been a sick man. Half his life he's spent in one long battle with constipation and the other half in the most appalling diarrhoea and in running across the courtyard holding himself together. But none of that, nor his eternal toothache, nor his insomnia, his eczema or his ruptures have stopped him from rolling round like a little barrel and doing mischief, every kind of mischief, to anybody and everybody, with the speed of a snake and the impact of a bull. It makes me wild, too, when people speak of him as a miser. It is really too insulting to misers. A miser loves money, or at least loves his avarice, and he's willing to sacrifice a great deal for it: but Baki loves nothing and nobody except himself, he hates everything in the world, living men or dead things. No, he's no miser, he's a canker and the kind of super-canker that would eat iron."

Eshrev Effendi ended his tale with a brief laugh.

"Ah, I know him as few do, even though he's never been able to do anything to me. You know, I've always been a hunter and nothing more, a free man — and he's the kind of fellow I've always been able to tuck into my belt."

Besides these superior personages Davna got to know all the other more important officials down to the last detail and was able to report on them to the Consul.

There was the thin and swarthy Deputy Secretary, Ibrahim Effendi, who was said to be incorruptible: a lank, silent man who cared only for his multitudinous children and for the Vizier's copies and archives. His life was spent in struggling with unskilful and conscienceless clerks, messengers and postmen and with the Vizier's papers, which could never be got into order — they seemed to be under a curse. He passed the day in an ill-lit room full of chests and shelves, in which there prevailed a system known only to him. Every time he looked for a copy of some document or for some old letter, he became as excited as if something utterly unexpected and unheard of had taken place; he jumped up, stood in the middle of the room, clutching both temples, and began to rack his brains. The gaze of his black

extent. In the hours of leisure which he was vouchsafed about lunch-time, he crept unobserved into the stables of the Depot and from there, by a hole through which dung was habitually thrown, he penetrated into a shrubbery from which he could observe the Consular garden and in it, with fair regularity, the Consul's daughter, towards whom he was drawn by something greater and stronger than all the strength of his feeble, boyish frame.

Between this shrubbery and the Consulate garden was a strip of neglected plum orchard, belonging to the Hafizadić Begs, but the garden of the Consulate could be well and clearly seen through it, arranged after the European manner. Paths had been cut in it and the molehills smoothed away. In the middle they had dug round and star-shaped flower-beds, flowers had been planted, and stakes driven in with balls of red or blue glass on top. The whole of this countryside was well-watered and sunny so that everything that was sown grew quickly and grew tall and brought forth blossom and fruit in abundance.

It was here that Salko the barber's lad beheld the daughter of Herr von Mitterer. As a matter of fact, he had also seen her in the town, driving with her father. But that happened so seldom and so briefly that he hardly knew what he saw most: the Consul's uniform, the yellow, varnished carriage or the young lady, who always had tightly tucked about her legs a grey carriage-rug with a red crown and monogram embroidered on it. This same distant maiden, even the colour of whose eyes he had hitherto been unable to see, he could now gaze upon at close quarters and he could see how she moved about the garden all alone, without a suspicion that anyone was eyeing her, in front of the veranda which had been arranged that spring and closed in with glass.

Hidden from the eyes of men, Salko, lurking with parted lips, crouching and holding his breath, goggled through the palings. And the girl, believing herself to be entirely alone, walked among the flowers, looked at the tree trunks, tripped from one end of the little path to the other. Then she would stand still and gaze now at the sky, now at her hand. (In just the same way young animals stop in the middle of their play, not knowing what further movements to make with their bodies.)

for the hundredth time, to go to the Vizier and complain of this traitor and thief of a Commander who had been raiding his treasury and making his life a misery for years. With all his Treasurer's soul he longed deeply and sincerely that he might live to see the victory of right and order and to see, in very truth, Bekhdjet's hollow-eyed, featureless head grinning from a pole.

The post of Deputy to the Vizier was discharged by Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak who, as we have seen, had occupied the same position under his predecessor. He was seldom in Travnik. When he was there he showed very much more understanding and inclination towards the Austrian than towards the French Consul. Nevertheless, this Bosnian was the one man in the oriental collection at the Residency of whom one could say with a certain assurance that he meant to keep his promises and had the power and the wit to carry them out.

## 10

The Consular era had brought movement and unrest to this provincial capital. It was directly or indirectly as a result of it that many rose and many stumbled and fell; many remembered it for the better, and many for the worse.

But how did it come about that the barber's apprentice, Salko Malukhija, the son of a poor widow, brought on himself such beatings by the servants of the Moslem notables? Why was it by this infliction that he ever after remembered the Consular era, when he had no part in the quarrels either between the consular servants or among the Begs and notables or between the men of learning and the people of the bazaar?

At the heart of this question lay one of those vital forces which circulate within and about us, which lift us up and drive us on, then abandon us and cast us down. And it was the particular force which for short we call "love" which drove Salko the barber's boy to break privily through the shrubs of Hafizadić's garden and climb a tree, in order to behold with his eyes the Consul's daughter Agatha.

Like all true lovers, Salko neither told nor displayed his love but found his own way of gratifying it, at least to this



was to follow, something still stranger and more exciting, as strange as the whole of this rainy day. He kept on assuring himself that nothing would really happen. What, indeed, *could* happen? And yet again, it would.

There, she was laying both hands on the open book. He held his breath and his thoughts stood still. It will, it will happen. And true enough, the girl got up slowly and undecidedly, clasped and then unclasped her hands, keeping only the tips of her fingers pressed together. She glanced at her nails — It will happen! — Suddenly she parted her fingers as if she were breaking off something thin and invisible, looked down, held her arms a little way away from her body and slowly began to dance in the middle of the red rug.

She had tilted her head forward a little, as if she were listening, and with eyes cast down she gazed at the toes of her shoes. Her face was impassive, entranced: the light and shadow of the rainy day alternated on it as she moved. And Salko, seeing his premonition coming true, entirely forgot who and where he was, and passed from the main trunk to the young boughs, climbed high above the fence and reached higher and higher, the faster her feet flew in the dance. His face was completely blinded with the leaves and the young bark. His whole inside began to jump and quiver. It was hard to support so much ecstasy in such a position. The girl went on dancing. As she repeated the same figure for the second or third time, a certain thrill of pleasure ran right through him, as if he were looking at some beloved sight which had long been familiar to him.

Suddenly the tree gave. The bough cracked and gave way under him. He felt himself falling through the alder leaves, he felt the branches scratching and whipping him, he felt a double thump, one on his back and one on his head. He shot through the hedge into Hafizadić's garden. He tumbled first on to the fence, then from the fence on to the ground, among some green-grown, worm-eaten boards which covered a ditch. The rotten planks gave under his weight and he sank up to the knees in mud and slime. When he raised his scratched and filthy face and opened his eyes, he saw standing over him a servant from Hafizadić's stables, an old woman with a wrinkled yellow face like his own mother.

Then she would begin once again to walk from end to end, waving her arms and clapping her hands, now before, now behind her: and her form, in its light-coloured dress, showed comically distorted, with the sky and the greenery, in the shining garden balls of different colours.

Salko completely forgot the world and lost all recollection of time and place and of his own bodily presence. It was only afterwards, when he got up to go, that he would feel how stiff his legs were from doubling up under him, how the fingers on his hands hurt, and the nails full of earth and bark. And long afterwards, in the shop, where he was often beaten for being so late, his heart throbbed with a disagreeable agitation. All the same, next day he could scarcely wait to get through his meagre lunch and make off and steal through the stables to Hafizadić's garden, quivering in advance for fear that he might be caught and for joy at what was in store for him.

One day — it was a bright, calm afternoon following a rainy morning — the girl was not in the garden. The flowerbeds were soaked and the paths trampled with the showers. Washed by the rain, the glass balls shone in the sun and gaily reflected the scattered white clouds. Seeing that the girl was not there, driven on by impatience and longing, Salko climbed first on to the fence, and then up an old plum-tree which grew close beside it, completely surrounded with bushy clumps of alder. He peeped through the thick alder leaves.

All the windows on the veranda were wide open and the sun and the bright sky flashed on their panes. The veranda looked all the cooler inside. Salko remembered it all perfectly. There was a red rug on the floor and unintelligible pictures on the wall. The Consul's daughter was sitting in a little, low chair. In her lap she held a large book but she kept on raising her eyes from it and her eyes kept straying about the veranda and out of the windows. This new attitude, in which he had never beheld her before, roused him all the more. The darker the shadows that fell on her, the more remote she grew, the longer he felt he must gaze. He trembled lest his foot should slip or he should break a twig. He was still with rapture at seeing her so motionless, with a face which in the shadow seemed still longer and paler, and he felt incessantly within himself that something more

rare beauty. And when the barber once again noticed his distraction, the first slap descended on him from that free left hand, on whose finger the soap collected as it was shaved off. The assistant's whole skill then consisted in not letting the soap-bowl drop from his hand and in quietly wiping off the lather, since everything then depended on that. Otherwise, the lather came showering down like rain and the narghileh gave trouble. It was by this device that Hamid the barber cured his apprentice of laziness, instilled sense into his head, drove out nonsensical and idle thoughts and saw to it that he riveted his eyes on his work.

But that same force which we mentioned at the beginning now suddenly appeared like a subterranean stream, unexpected and unguessed at, at quite a different point and in quite different circumstances, striving to make capture upon capture and to extend its sway over an increasing number of human beings of both sexes. This led to its constantly welling up where there was no room for it and where it was unable to maintain its hold on account of the resistance it was bound to meet.

From the very first Frau von Mitterer had always visited the Catholic churches and chapels round Travnik and had made gifts to them. She did this not so much out of her own desire to do so as on the instructions of the Colonel, whose influence this was intended to strengthen among the Catholic clergy and laity. Vases of imitation porcelain were ordered from Vienna, and rickety candelabra with gilt branches, all cheap and inartistic stuff but a rare novelty in these regions. From Zagreb they procured some embroidered damask stoles and chasubles, worked by the nuns of that city, which the Consul's wife presented to the monastery at Guča Gora or to the priests of the poor village churches about Travnik. But in this work, which should have been useful and pleasing in the sight of God, Anna Maria was unable to observe moderation. As always, she was carried away by her eccentric nature which doomed everything she undertook to recoil upon her and work contrariwise. By her zeal she very soon raised doubts among the Moslems, and scared and alarmed the people and the friars at Dolac who were already apprehensive and mistrustful enough. In making and distributing her gifts her behaviour was capricious and high-handed. She swept

"Have you hurt yourself, my little cuckoo? What brings you tumbling into ditches?"

But he could only stare fearfully about him, looking for the last glimmer of that beauty which had lighted him only a little while ago in the high place from which he had fallen. He heard the old woman but did not understand what she said to him, just as he saw, wide-eyed, Hafizadić's manservants running from the other end of the garden with sticks in their hands, but could not come to himself nor grasp what it all had to do with him or what these people wanted with him.

The serious, lonely little girl went on with her walks and her innocent dancing about the garden and the veranda, knowing nothing of all that had happened on her account in the orchard near by, just as earlier on she had had no idea that anyone was observing her.

After his beating in Hafizadić's garden and the dressing-down he subsequently received in the barber's shop for getting back so late, Salko went supperless that day. This was always the punishment inflicted by his mother, a sallow woman, prematurely aged, whom poverty had worn out and made harsh and shrewish. Thereafter the lad stopped creeping into other people's gardens, nor did he venture among hedges and trees, to gaze on what was not for him. He stayed at his work and dreamed, still sadder and paler, of the wonderful stranger maid. She danced before him now as his passion found will and ability to picture her, without any danger of his falling into strange ditches or getting caught and beaten.

Yet even dreams of beauty must be paid for. While he stood, holding the soap-bowl in his thin, pale hands, beside the fat barber who was shaving a gentleman from it, the barber noticed his absent look and signalled to him with his eyes and with the customary movements of his hand that he must watch the master's razor and learn, and not gape with vacant looks somewhere into the distance beyond the shop door. The boy pulled himself together, gave a frightened look at his master and then obediently fixed his eyes on his razor. But a minute later his gaze was absent once again, seeing, on that smooth bluish patch which was growing on the gentleman's head under the barber's blade, only a paradisaal garden and in it a maiden light of step and of

from Travnik. But then there began all over again that trembling and confusion and the morbid longing to be quit for ever and as soon as possible of this beauty which blinded and brought low.

Luckily for the priest, Brother Mijat the Carter soon returned to his parish and the young man piously and sincerely made his confession. The Carter was a powerful, active man of fifty, with a broad face, a tip-tilted nose, and slanting eyes, shrewd and experienced and sane, full of humour and wit, a well-read, eloquent friar. He had no difficulty in understanding the affair and in grasping the poor priest's situation. He sent him back at once to the monastery; and next time Frau von Mitterer came riding with her escort, instead of the shy priest out came the Carter, smiling and self-possessed, who sat down on a tree-trunk and to the amazement of the Consul's wife replied to her proposals for the arrangement of the church through a heavy cigarette-holder:

"I am astonished, Madam, that you should wear yourself out on these country roads when by God's grace you might sit at home in all ease and comfort. God bless us, you can't go interfering in the arrangements of this church and chapel of ours, even if you were to spend the whole of the Emperor's treasury on them. Our churches are just like us: it's no use trying to make them better. If you've gifts to give to these village churches of ours, send them by someone. They'll be welcome to us, and God will repay you."

Frau von Mitterer, outraged, began once more to talk about the church and the parish but Brother Mijat made light of all her remarks. And as she rode off on her black horse in a fury, the priest removed his friar's cap from his tangled hair, made an impish little bow, both deferential and mocking, and said to her:

"Your horse, milady, is fine enough for a Bishop to ride."

Anna Maria never went to Orašje church again.

About the same time the priest at Dolac spoke to von Mitterer about the same matter. As the Brothers esteemed the Consul as a friend and protector and did not wish in any way to offend him, they chose the stout and heavy but sly and tactful Brother Ivo to find a way of communicating to him that Frau von Mitterer's zeal was irksome to them, yet without being offensive

down upon the churches, rearranged to her own taste the objects on the altar, gave orders for the buildings to be aired, cleaned and whitewashed. The Brothers who are in any case scared of novelty and do not like anyone to meddle in their affairs, even with the best of intentions, at first took all this with modest shyness, but they soon began to exchange glances, and to combine and prepare for resistance.

To the priest-in-charge in the near-by village of Orašje, this extraordinary zeal of Frau von Mitterer's constituted a real disaster and danger. The priest, whose name was Brother Mijat Baković, was alone at the time, as his superior, whose name was also Mijat but who was generally known as "the Carter", was away on business for the Order. The priest-in-charge was a weakly, short-sighted young man, given to dreaming. He found it difficult to put up with the loneliness and the hard village life and he had not yet firmly found his feet in the Order. Anna Maria fastened on this young priest with all the protective ardour of which she was capable and with that half maternal, half amatory concern which so easily leads even maturer and more experienced men into confusion and misunderstanding. At the beginning of the summer, she rode two or three times a week to Orašje, dismounted at the church with her escort, called for the priest and gave him instructions as to the ordering of his church and his house. She interfered in his household affairs, in the disposition of his time, in the church arrangements. The young friar regarded her as a marvellous, unlooked for apparition, too great and beautiful to be enjoyed without some discomfort. The narrow band of white lace about her neck shone against the black stuff of her habit, as if it were of some luminous material and dazzled eyes which had never ventured to look straight into a female face. In her presence the young priest trembled like one in a fever. And Frau von Mitterer looked with delight at those thin trembling hands and at the friar's face, while he was dying of shame at his own tremors.

When she had ridden off down the Travnik road, the priest remained standing by the bench in front of the old priest's house, like one struck down. Then everything seemed to him stale, heavy and dull, the village, the church and his work. And everything blossomed and shone once more when he saw riders coming

And so the "young Consul" fell in love with Jelka, a young girl from Dolac.

We have seen that when Madame Daville arrived in Travnik, time and patience were needed for her to win the confidence of the Friars and the goodwill of the people of Dolac. At first not even the poorest were willing to give their children to serve at the French Consulate. But when they got to know Madame Daville better and when it became clear that the first girls who worked with her learnt all manner of things, people began to make themselves available for work with the French Consul's lady. A few girls from Dolac did kitchen work together, or the needlework which Madame Daville taught them.

In the summer months there would be three or four girls gathered together, embroidering or knitting. They sat on the wide veranda under the window, bent over their work and singing softly. On his way in to Daville, Desfossés often passed these girls. They then bent their heads lower, their singing grew confused and broken. Pacing the broad corridor with his long strides, the young man often took a better look at the girls and threw them a word by way of greeting, to which they were unable for bashfulness to reply. And it would indeed have been hard to answer, since every time it was a different one, one he had just learned that day, and it threw them into confusion, just as they were confused by his freedom, the swiftness of his movements and the assurance in his voice. In these frequent passages Desfossés, through the logic which governs affairs of this kind, fell in love with the face of the girl who dipped her head lowest before him.

Her name was Jelka and she was the daughter of a small merchant who had a modest house, full of children, at Dolac. The thick, heavy fringe of her brown hair fell down nearly to her eyes. Some indefinable quality, which had something to do with her dress and with her beauty, distinguished her from the other embroiderers. The young man began to single out her brown nape and white, firm neck from among the bent heads of the other girls. And when one day he gazed a little longer at that bowed neck, the girl unexpectedly raised her head, as if his look burned her and she wished to escape from it; and in doing so, she showed him for a second a young, broad face,

either to him or to his wife. Brother Ivo, whom the Turks called, not without reason, "*Muzevir*", the Crafty, managed this brilliantly. He first recounted to the Consul how, for fear of the Turks, they had to be careful how they stepped and, more particularly, with whom they were seen to associate, how welcome they found the gifts which Frau von Mitterer brought them, and how they would never cease to pray to God for her and for him who sent them. Finally, there emerged from the whole story the unspoken conclusion that they would be very glad to accept further gifts but that it would be better for Frau von Mitterer not to present them personally and not to concern herself with their use and distribution.

But Frau von Mitterer was already sick of churches and disillusioned with the Friars and their congregation. She burst forth one morning before the Colonel and poured upon his head a shower of wounding words and insults. The French Consul, she cried, was right to associate with the Jews, who were better brought up than these Turkish Catholics. She flew at him with the enquiry whether he was a Consul-General or a sacristan. She swore that her foot should never again cross the threshold of the church or the parsonage at Dolac.

Thus it was that the young priest of Orašje was rescued from what for Anna Maria would have been an idle game but for him a serious calamity. So ended, likewise, the pious phase of Frau von Mitterer's life at Travnik.

The force of which we have been speaking all the time did not spare the French Consulate either, on the opposite bank of the Lašva, since it has no regard for flags or coats of arms. While Madame Daville was looking after her children on the ground floor of the "Dubrovnik Depot", while Daville was wearing himself out over his exhaustive Consular reports and his complicated literary plans, on the floor above them the "young Consul" was wrestling with loneliness and with the desires which it breeds but cannot satisfy. He helped Daville in his work and rode about the neighbourhood, he learnt much of the language and customs of the people and laboured at his book on Bosnia. He did everything he could to fill up the days and nights. And yet, for one who was young and bright there still remained vigour and time enough for longings and loneliness and for aberrations such as youth only knows.



opposite ideas of the town. The first would say that he had been staying in Hell, the second that he had been not very far from Paradise. Places like Travnik, which are badly situated and have an ungrateful climate, usually have a few weeks in the year which by their beauty and their delightfulness compensate, as it were, for all the caprices and miseries of the other seasons. At Travnik this period falls between the beginning of June and the end of August and generally embraces the whole month of July.

When the snow has melted even in the deepest hollows, when the spring rains and blizzards have ceased; when the gales have blown themselves out, now cold, then warmer, now full of sound and force, then quiet and gentle; when the clouds withdraw at last to the upper edges of the steep stone circle of mountains which surrounds the town; when day with its length and light and warmth drives back night; when on the slopes above the town the gilded corn and the bending pear-trees begin to droop over the fields a rich harvest, dropping from its own ripeness; then comes in this short and lovely Travnik summer.

Desfossés cut short his walks about the countryside and wasted hours in the great, steep Consulate garden, studying its familiar paths and shrubs as closely as if they were such marvels as had never been seen before. Jelka would arrive before the other girls or tried to linger behind them. From the little lawn on which they worked, she went more and more often into the Consulate for thread or water or lunch. Now she and the young man met on the narrow pathways overgrown with green. Here she would bend downwards her broad, pale face and he would utter with a smile his words of "Illyrian" in which the letter *r* was a hoarse, guttural sound and the accent was always on the last syllable.

One afternoon they stayed longer alone on one of the border paths among the thick leaves where even the shade breathed heat. The girl had on wide Turkish trousers of a dove colour, and a narrow waistcoat of pale blue silk with a single button. Her pleated blouse was gathered at the neck with a silver brooch. Her arms, which were hidden to the elbows by her blouse, were youthful and rounded, with a rosy flush of blood lacing the skin. The young man took her by the forearm. The blood at once fled, leaving the white prints of his fingers.

with bright but gentle brown eyes, a firm but not quite regular nose, and a wide but perfectly formed mouth with both lips exactly alike and barely meeting. Taken by surprise, the young man gazed at this face and saw how the firm mouth trembled a little at the corners, as if with tears held back, while the brown eyes sparkled with a smile they failed to conceal. The young man laughed too and called out to her a word from his "Illyrian" dictionary — any word, since at his age and in such circumstances all words are good and full of meaning. To hide her smiling eyes and the lips round which, though hardly perceptible, there played the lines betokening tears, the girl lowered her head again and displayed once more her white neck in its brown hair.

The same exchange was repeated several times between them, like a game, during the following days. And every game brings with it a desire to continue and prolong it. This longing is irresistible when the parties concerned are such a young girl as this and a lonely and passionate young man. In this way trivial words, long gazings and unconscious smiles combine to form a solid bridge which builds itself.

He began to think of her at night and when he woke in the morning. He began to seek her out, first in his thoughts, and then in reality, to meet her more often and to gaze at her longer, as at some marvel. Since at that season everything was bursting into bud and leaf, she seemed to him like a part — a sentient, separate part — of that rich world of plants and trees. "She is a springing plant . . ." he said to himself, as a man sings words without thinking why he is uttering them or thinking of the meaning of what he utters. Rosy, laughing and shy as she was, bending her head each time as a flower does its crown, she genuinely grew to be linked in his thoughts with the flowers and fruits, and that in a special, deeper sense which he himself did not realize — as something like the mind and soul of the fruit and flowers.

When the spring began to wane and the garden was in leaf, the girls moved into the garden, where they did their embroidery all through the summer. If anybody were to question two travellers, one of whom had passed through Travnik in the winter and the other in the summer, he would get two completely

trunk, as on to a bed laid ready for them. She was still, as before, unresisting, voiceless and motionless, but when the young man's hands slipped down her and grasped her waist between her trousers and her jacket, where there was only blouse, the girl started away, like a twig which is pulled down when they gather the grapes and flies back. He never felt her stand up from him nor how it was that he found himself once more in the pathway. The girl was kneeling at his feet, with her hands clasped, she uttered words which he did not recognize but which in that moment were clearer to him than his own mother tongue. She was imploring him to be human, to spare her, not to bring her to ruin, since she herself could not defend herself against that which had come upon her with the irresistible force of death, but with a force and a terror greater than death's. She was begging him by his mother's life and by whatever might be dearest to him and she could only repeat in a voice suddenly hoarse with fear and emotion:

"Don't! Don't!"

The young man felt the blood beating in the veins of his temples, he struggled to pull himself together and to grasp this unexpected and appallingly swift change in the whole situation. He asked himself in surprise what it was that had suddenly slipped this fainting woman from under him and what it was that held him now in this ludicrous position: he was ardent and erect, like some pagan emperor, and she at his feet, kneeling, with clasped hands and her tearful eyes raised to his face, like a saint in a holy picture. He wanted to raise her from the ground, draw her once more towards him, and lay her on the knotty trunk of the fallen pear-tree, but could not find the strength or the energy. Everything had suddenly and inexplicably changed. He did not know how it had happened but he saw clearly that this feeble girl, seemingly as pliable as the twig of a tree, had in some miraculous fashion passed out of the "plant world", in which she had lived entirely hitherto, into some completely different world, that she had craftily escaped under the sure protection of some stronger will, where he could no longer do anything to her. He felt himself deceived, cheated, painfully disenchanted. He was seized with shame, then with rage, at her, at himself, at the whole world. He bent down and raised her carefully from

Her lips — rosy but pale, remarkable in their firmness and in being identically alike — curved slightly at the ends in that imploring and, as it were, tearful smile, but immediately after the girl bent down her head and leaned towards him, as mute and pliable as a blade of grass or the twig of a tree. "A plant", he thought once again, yet that which clung about him was a human creature, a woman distracted even to the point of agony, with a heart which was still hesitant but was already resigned to its breaking and its fall. Her hands hung idly, her lips were half parted, her eyes half closed, like one who has lost consciousness. Thus she lay, upon him and about him, faint with the passion of love, with the rapture which love promises and with the fear which follows like a shadow behind it. Bowed, cast down and laid low, she was the image of complete surrender, powerlessness, defeat and despair and yet of undreamed of greatness too.

The young man was carried away by the surge of his blood and by a feeling of utter happiness and of irrepressible triumph. Unlimitable visions flamed and died in him, like sparks before the eyes. Yes, that was it! He had always felt, and so many times declared, that this poor, barren, neglected country was really a land of wealth and delight. And here was one of its hidden beauties now manifesting itself.

The steep, green, flowery banks once more broke into bloom and the air was filled with an unknown, intoxicating sweetness which, it now seemed to him, had always dwelt concealed in this valley. The secret wealth of an outwardly drab and poverty-stricken country was made plain beyond proof and it was suddenly revealed that the stubborn silence of the land secreted within itself this subtle, intermittent, lovely perfume, in which were dissolved alike the last breath of the resistance and the rapture of content, that its look of eternal blankness was no more than a mask under which light flowed and quivered, a light which had the redness of young blood.

There was at this spot a thick and branching old pear-tree, overthrown and lying along the steep bank like a divan. At the foot it seemed all withered up: but it still put forth its budding leaves. They leaned upon it and then sank down, intertwined, first he himself, then the girl after him, on to the knotty pear

"The women are as a rule strongly built: many of them strike the eye by the refinement and regularity of their features, the beauty of their figures and the whiteness of their skin which dazzles the beholder."

11

Everything in this country eventually took some astonishing twist, and everything was capable, at any moment, of becoming the opposite of what it appeared to be. Daville had already begun to reconcile himself to the disagreeable fact that he had lost Mehmed Husrev Pasha, a lively, open-hearted man to whom he could always look for a cordial reception, a friendly understanding and some help at least, and that he had been given in his place the hard, cold, unhappy Ibrahim Pasha who was a burden to himself and others and from whom it was as difficult to extract a kind word or a human sentiment as it would be from a stone. His first contact with the Vizier confirmed him in this opinion and so, more particularly, did everything that he learned about him from Davna. But the Consul was soon forced to realize in this same instance, how, with all his expert, factual judgement, Davna was in truth a very biased connoisseur of men. Actually, in questions regarding ordinary business or the routine relations of everyday life, Davna's judgment was penetrating and mercilessly exact and could be relied upon. But as soon as he was faced with more complicated or delicate questions, his intellectual sluggishness and his indifference to moral considerations drove him to generalize and to form over-hasty and over-simplified conclusions. It was so in this case. After his second and third audiences the Consul had already noticed that the Vizier was not as unapproachable as he had seemed at first sight. Above all, the new Vizier too had his favourite topic of conversation; only in his case this was not the sea, as it had been with Husrev Mehmed Pasha, or some other stirring and practical subject. For Ibrahim Pasha the starting and finishing point of every conversation was the fall of his master Selim III and his own personal tragedy, which had been closely bound up with that fall. From this point his

the ground, mumbling a word or two. She was just as unresisting and docile as before and followed every movement of his hand as she had done a little while ago, but she continued, with words and looks, to beg him to have pity on her and spare her. He thought no more of renewing his embraces. Frowning and with forced politeness, he helped her to smooth out the creases in her dress and to rearrange the silver brooch at her throat, which had come apart. Then, just as suddenly and inexplicably to him, the girl vanished down the slope towards the Consulate building.

The young man passed a few days of disquiet. He was continually haunted by the confusion, the impotent rage and shame of those first moments in the garden. The question kept on coming back to him in his thoughts — what had happened to him and to the girl and how had it happened? And continually he thrust it defiantly from him and tried not to think of that brief meeting on the deserted garden path. Then again, he often said to himself with an ironic smile:

“Yes, yes, you’re certainly an infallible psychologist and the complete lover. You got it from somewhere that she was a piece of Nature, a pagan spirit of this country, a hidden treasure which had only to be picked up. And you deigned to stoop. Then, all of a sudden, everything changed. She knelt down like Isaac when his father Abraham wanted to slay him as a sacrifice, but an angel rescued him from death at the last moment. Yes, that’s how she knelt. And you played the part of Abraham beside her. I congratulate you! You have taken to acting in *tableaux vivants* from the Bible with deep ethical and religious morals attached. Congratulations!”

It took long walks among the hillside woods round about to calm him and divert his thoughts in another direction. Unsatisfied desire and youthful vanity tormented him in this way for a few days; then they ceased. He began to calm down and forget. He continued to see the girls embroidering in the garden as he passed, Jelka’s bowed head among them, but he felt no confusion, nor did he stop. He only threw them, freely and gaily, some word he had learned that day and passed on, always smiling, fresh and collected.

Only, one night about this time, he added to the manuscript of his book on Bosnia, in the passage in which he spoke of the types and racial qualities of the Bosnians, the following sentence:

but I have seen with my own eyes what became of my own master, Sultan Selim. He was a man whom God had endowed with all good qualities of body and mind. Like a candle he burnt himself away and wasted himself for the happiness and progress of the Empire. Intelligent, refined, a lover of the truth, he never gave a thought to evil and treason, never dreamed what depths of wickedness, what perversions and faithlessness lie hidden in men: and so he did not know how to guard himself and no one could save him. Spending all his strength in the discharge of his duties as a ruler and living a life as pure as that recorded of the first Caliphs, Selim took no steps to shield himself from the assaults and treachery of wicked men. And so it was possible for a detachment of *janiaks*, the scum of the Army, led by a mad ruffian, to cast such a Sultan from his throne and shut him up in the Serai, to frustrate utterly all his far-seeing plans for saving the Empire and to place on the throne a silly, sensual wretch, surrounded with drunkards, commoners and professional traitors. Ah, well, that's how things go in this world! And how few people there are who perceive it, and still fewer who will and can prevent it."

From this subject it was no great step to Bosnia and the conditions in which both the Vizier and the Consul were obliged to live in that country. Ibrahim Pasha could not find words sharp enough and comparisons black enough when discussions began about Bosnia and the Bosnians, and Daville listened to him now with genuine fellow-feeling and real understanding. The Vizier could not lament sufficiently that the news of Selim's fall had overtaken him when he was at the head of the army which was just preparing to expel the Russians from Wallachia and Moldavia, at the moment when success was already assured. It had simultaneously robbed the Empire of the best of Sultans and him, Ibrahim Pasha, of a great victory already within his grasp and had suddenly cast him forth, a humiliated, broken man, into this distant poverty-stricken land.

"You see yourself, my noble friend, what a place we live in and what I have to contend with and to endure. A man could more easily rule a herd of wild buffaloes than these Bosnian Begs and Ayans. They are savages, savages, savages, unreasoning, coarse and crude but touchy and proud, obstinate but empty-headed. Believe

views broadened away on all sides. It was across this event that he viewed everything that happened in the world around him and everything, in turn, viewed in this light, seemed dark, dreary and hopeless. From the Consul's point of view, however, the main thing was that the Vizier was not merely a miraculous corpse and an intellectual mummy: there were subjects and words which could move and rouse him. Further, the Consul came in time to perceive that this heavy, melancholy Vizier, every conversation with whom was a lecture on the vanity of all existence, was in many matters a more reliable and better man than the easy, volatile, eternally smiling Mehmed Pasha. The way in which Daville listened to the Vizier's pessimistic views and general discourses, pleased the Vizier; he found it to his taste and it inspired confidence. He never talked as long or as confidentially either with von Mitterer or with any other person as he came more and more to talk with Daville. The Consul, on his side, became more and more habituated to these conversations, in which the two of them plunged into the manifold miseries of this imperfect world and from which he would finally extract some small concession, which had indeed been the cause of his coming to talk to the Vizier.

These talks regularly began with an encomium on the last of Napoleon's victories in the field or on some point of international affairs but the Vizier's natural bias led him to pass on at once from positive and pleasant matters to grim and unpleasant ones — to England, for example, her toughness, ruthlessness and rapacity, against which even the genius of Napoleon battled in vain. From there it was only a step to general reflections on the difficulty of ruling nations and commanding peoples, the ungrateful task of rulers and commanders, and the way in which the affairs of this world mostly went awry or retrogressed, contrary to the feeble laws of ethics and the desires of all noble-hearted men. From this point a transition was easily made to the fate of Selim III and his collaborators. Daville listened with speechless attention and deep sympathy, while the Vizier spoke with a certain bitter emotion:

"The world does not want to be happy. Nations do not want reasonable government or noble rulers. Goodness in this world is a naked orphan. May the All Highest aid your Emperor,



All this so heaped and piled up in the Consul's mind, that, despite the fact that he usually concluded his business successfully, he used to return home like a man drugged with despair, could not eat his supper and would dream at nights of disasters, exiles and miseries of every sort.

All the same, Daville was pleased that in the Vizier's incurable pessimism he had found, momentarily at least, a point of contact with him, as it were one little, secluded spot where the two of them could meet as man with man, in that rough Turkish world without a spark of sympathy or a trace of humanity which could be reached by an unhappy foreign Consul like himself. At times it seemed to him that it would need only a little time and a little persistence for a real friendship and a genuine human relationship to develop and establish themselves between him and the Vizier. But just then something happened which suddenly showed the whole impassable distance separating them, which displayed the Vizier in an entirely new light, as a worse and more deplorable person than Davna had pictured him in their conversations. Daville was thrown once again into inextricable confusion and robbed of the hope that somehow one might find in these parts one spark of humanity which would live longer than a tear or last longer than the duration of a smile or a glance. In amazement and despair the Consul then told himself that the harsh school of the Orient was never-ending and that in these countries there was no end to surprises, just as there was no true moderation, no steady judgment and no lasting value in any human relationships.

He could not begin to understand nor could he foresee or tell what one might expect from these people.

One day the Vizier suddenly summoned both Consuls at the same time, which he had never previously done. Their escorts met at the gate. The Divan had a look of special ceremony. The pages buzzed and whispered. The Vizier was pleasant and dignified. After the first coffee and the first pipes the Governor of the town and the Secretary also appeared and humbly took post. The Vizier announced to the Consuls that his Deputy, Suleiman Pasha, had crossed the Drina last week with his Bosnian troops and had annihilated an exceedingly strong and well equipped Serbian force, trained and led by Russian officers. He

me when I tell you: these Bosnians have absolutely no sense of honour in their hearts or understanding in their heads. They rival each other in squabbles and intrigues among themselves and that is the one thing they know and can do. And it is with these people that I am supposed to put down the rebellion in Serbia! That's how things are going in our Empire since Sultan Selim was dethroned and set aside and God alone knows what we shall come to."

The Vizier paused and was silent and his deep sunk eyes, which only the recital of his despair could brighten any more, shone like dull crystals in his impassive face.

Daville broke the silence and put in with adroit circumspexion:

"But if, by some happy turn of circumstance, things were to change at Constantinople and you were to regain the post of Grand Vizier..."

"Ah, then!" The Vizier dismissed it with a wave of the hand: this morning it pleased him to plunge himself and the Consul into the blackest hopelessness.

"Ah, but then!" he repeated in a dull voice. "I should issue decrees (which would not be carried out), I should defend the country from the Russians, the English, the Serbs and all the others who are falling upon it. I should save what it will be very hard to save."

At the end of these conversations the Consul usually raised the question which was the reason for his having come, a permit for the export of wheat to Dalmatia, a frontier dispute or some such matter, and the Vizier, carried away by his gloomy meditations, would give his approval without much thought.

At other times the Vizier would talk during the audience of other matters, but always with the same heavy, hopeless calm and the same bitterness. He would tell of the new Grand Vizier, who hated him, and envied him because he had been more fortunate in the previous wars, and who on that account never sent him directions or intelligence or equipment for the struggle against Serbia. Or he would impart the news he had received of his predecessor at Travnik, Husrev Mehmed Pasha, whom the same Grand Vizier had banished to Kaser.

Vizier and the Bosnian army. Rivalry, and the anxiety not to be left behind by his antagonist, likewise overcame Daville's horror and nausea and he uttered a few sentences in honour of the victory, together with a desire for the further success of the Ottoman arms and for the peace of the empire. He pronounced all this in a somewhat wooden voice. He seemed, quite distinctly, to hear each of his own words as if they came from someone else. Everything said was translated. The Vizier then began to speak once again. He thanked the Consuls for their good wishes and congratulations and counted himself fortunate to see them at his side at a moment when, with deep emotion, he beheld these arms which the perfidious Muscovites had left ignominiously on the field.

Daville forced himself to look at the Vizier. His eyes had in truth grown brighter and shone like crystals at their extremities.

The same deep voice again uttered a few hallowed, unintelligible words.

A barely audible murmur went through the Divan. The audience was ended. Seeing that von Mitterer was looking at the objects on the mat, Daville too mustered his strength and cast a glance at the scattered trophies. The inanimate objects of leather and metal seemed twice as dead and lay there, pitiful and abandoned, as if they had been dug up and brought into the sunlight after centuries. The indescribable mass of severed ears and noses lay still; about them was a scattering of salt, black as earth with blood and mingled with bran. A thin, cold, rancid odour came from it all.

Daville glanced occasionally at von Mitterer, then at the mat before him, all with the secret hope that the scene before him would vanish like a bad dream, but each time his gaze fell upon the same objects, improbable but real and pitiless in their immobility.

"Wake up!" Daville thought quickly, "wake up, shake off this nightmare and get out into the sun, rub your eyes and breathe in a little fresh air!" But there was no awakening, for this sordid horror was the rock bottom of reality. That was what these people were like. This was their life. This was how the very best among them acted.

expressed the hope that after this victory there would be no more Russians in Serbia and that this would in all probability mean the end of the whole rebellion. The victory was an important one, the Vizier said, and the time was probably approaching when peace and order would be re-established in Serbia. Knowing that the Consuls, as good friends and neighbours, would be glad to hear this, he had summoned them to share his satisfaction at the good news.

The Vizier was silent. As if this were a prearranged signal, numerous pages came into the hall almost at a run. A reed mat had been spread in the empty half of the great room. A number of baskets were brought in, with sacks of goat-hair and greasy black sheepskin bags. All these receptacles were quickly untied and opened and their contents began to be shaken on to the mat which had been spread. An attendant, meanwhile, brought the Consuls lemonade and fresh pipes.

There began to rain upon the mat severed human ears and noses in considerable numbers, an indescribable mass of wretched human flesh, salted and blackened with dried blood. A cold, revolting odour of damp salt and clotted blood swept through the Divan. Out of the baskets and the bags there were extracted a few hats, belts and bandoliers with metal eagles on them, and out of the sacks red and yellow standards, narrow and gold-fringed, with a picture of a saint in the middle. After them there fell out two or three ikons which dropped with a dull sound to the floor. Last of all, they brought in a sheaf of bayonets tied with cord.

These were the trophies of the victory over the Serbian insurgent army, "which the Russians had organized and led".

Some unseen person, to one side of the room, said in a deep, intoning voice: "God has blessed the arms of Islam!" All the Turks present replied with an unintelligible murmuring.

Daville, who had never so much as dreamed of expecting such a scene, felt his stomach turn and the lemonade bitter on his lips and threatening to spout up his nose. He forgot about his pipe and could only gaze at von Mitterer as if looking to him for rescue and enlightenment. The Austrian was himself pale and bowed, but as he had long been used to similar surprises, he was the first to find his tongue and congratulate the

Thus, with the aid of these contacts, Daville did what he could to weaken Austria's military strength and to maintain a continual tension on the Austrian-Bosnian frontier.

Among the garrison commanders the commander of Novi, Ahmed Beg Cerić, stood out particularly. Daville knew him personally. He was quite a young man, who had settled into his father's command after the latter's death, completely mature, of fine bearing, proud, eloquent and impetuous. Ahmed Beg burned with a desire to distinguish himself in battle on the frontier his forbears had so often crossed and raided. He had recklessly paraded his connections with the French and used to send threats and insulting messages to the Austrian commander on the other side of the frontier "from Ahmed Beg Cerić and the French Emperor Napoleon". In the tradition of the border commanders, he hated and despised the Vizier, seldom went to Travnik and declined to take any instructions or orders.

The Austrians, through their people at Constantinople, had managed, indirectly, to blacken Ahmed Beg's name and to represent him as a traitor in French pay. It was a quicker, cheaper and surer method than battling for years with a young and bumptious commander on the frontier. The snare was well laid. A warrant for Cerić's execution arrived at Travnik, with a reprimand to the Vizier for bearing with such commanders and leaving the Porte to hear of their treachery through other channels. The dilemma was clearly put: either the vexatious commander must be removed and dispatched or there must be a change of Viziers at Travnik.

It was no easy matter to lure Ahmed Beg to Travnik, but in this too the Austrians were helpful. The commander was tricked into believing that the French Consul had summoned him to a conference. At Travnik he was immediately seized, fettered and thrown into confinement in the Citadel.

On this occasion Daville saw what Turkish brutality meant, what fraud and force could do in combination and with what forces he had to contend in this accursed town.

On the very day after Ahmed Beg's arrest, a gipsy was hanged down by the graveyard and the crier announced in this connection that he was hanged for having "bidden good day to the commander of Novi", when they were taking him to the

Daville once again felt his stomach heave into his throat and darkness swim before his eyes. Still, he managed to take his leave politely and go calmly home with his suite, where, instead of sitting down to lunch, he went and lay on his bed.

Next day Daville and von Mitterer met, without any enquiries as to who owed a visit to whom, and forgetting how much had happened since they last saw each other. They simply rushed into each other's arms. They shook each other long by the hand and gazed into each other's eyes without a word, like two shipwrecked mariners. Von Mitterer had already had intelligence of the real worth of the Turkish victory and of the origin of the trophies. The arms had been taken from a Serb detachment and the standards and all the rest came from an ordinary massacre which the exasperated and unemployed troops had committed on the Christian peasantry of Bosnia, somewhere near Zvornik, during some Church festival.

Von Mitterer was not a man who liked to expand in generalities and for him there was no more to be said on the subject. But Daville worried himself ill over this last audience, asking himself continually: "But why this lie? Why this futile, almost childish brutality? What meaning has it when they laugh or cry? What lies behind their silence? And how can the Vizier, with his high notions, how can the apparently honourable Suleiman Pasha and the intelligent Tahir Beg, how can they prepare things of this kind and even be present at exhibitions like this which come from some other, lower, ghastly world? Which is their real face? Which is life and which deliberate play-acting? When are they lying and when are they speaking the truth?"

And beside his physical disquiet he felt himself tormented and gnawed by the knowledge that he would never succeed in finding a rational standard for these people and their proceedings.

Affairs of this kind were still harder and more painful when French interests were involved, and consequently Daville's self-respect and his professional zeal as well.

Daville had, by means of agents, kept continually in touch with the Turkish garrison commanders on the Austrian frontier. Every plundering foray by these garrisons, even the smallest, or even the news of preparations for such a foray forced the Austrians to send troops into these areas and keep them there.

he pronounced the name of Napoleon, asking the Vizier what the world would say when it saw the supreme penalty inflicted on a high officer of distinction simply because he was thought to be a friend of France and had been falsely accused by the Austrians. But every word of Daville's foundered impotently and at once in the Vizier's silence. Finally the Vizier said:

"I thought it safest and best to keep him here until this outcry and these accusations against him had blown over, but if you wish, I will return him to his post and let him wait there. But the issue will be just as Constantinople may decide."

It seemed to Daville as if all these vague words had no connexion with the commander's fate and his own preoccupation, but he could get no more out of the Vizier.

The Consul also saw Suleiman Pasha, who had just returned from Serbia, and Tahir Beg, and was surprised and aghast when he met with the same silence and the same look of pained astonishment from them. They looked at him as if he were simply wasting breath on some case which had long been over and irretrievably lost, although politeness required that his speech should not be interrupted but should be heard with patience and sympathy to the end.

On his way back to the Consulate the Consul asked Davina what he thought. The interpreter, who had translated at all three of the morning's interviews, answered calmly:

"After what the Vizier said it is clear that there is nothing to be done for Ahmed Beg. The case is lost. It will be either banishment to Asia or worse."

The blood went to the Consul's head.

"What? But he promised at least that he would send him back to Novi!"

The interpreter rested the glance of his smouldering eyes for a moment on the Consul's face and said in a dry, matter-of-fact voice:

"How could he return him to Novi where the commander has a hundred ways of defending and saving himself?"

It seemed to the Consul that his interpreter too had in his voice and his look something of the same impatient surprise which had so confused and offended him while he was talking with the Vizier and his staff officers.

Citadel. This was equivalent to a sentence of death on the commander. There at once came down upon everything and everybody that blind, cold fear which from time to time descends upon Travnik and Bosnia, and slows and stops all life and even thought for a few hours or days, thus allowing the power which has spread it to execute its will swiftly and unhindered during that time.

All his life long Daville had loathed and avoided everything that was dramatic. He could hardly conceive that a dispute might have a tragic end as its only possible outcome. It was contrary to his whole nature. Yet now he was involved, indirectly, in a real tragedy, to which there could be no other solution and from which there was no exit. In his present nervous state, hemmed in by mountains, confused and harried now for two years by difficulties and mischances of every sort, Daville reckoned that he was more deeply involved in this drama of the commander of Novi than in fact he was. It pained him especially that the commander, as Davina affirmed, had been enticed to Travnik by a misuse of Daville's own name, so that the wretched man might imagine that the French Consul had been an accomplice in his calamity.

After a sleepless night he decided to seek an audience with the Vizier and to intercede on behalf of the commander, but with tact and moderation, so as not to do him still further harm. The conversation with the Vizier revealed to him a new aspect of Ibrahim Pasha. It was not the Ibrahim Pasha with whom, only a few days ago, he had conversed as with a bosom friend on the disorders of the world and the necessity for men of high ideals and intelligence to unite. As soon as he mentioned the commander, the Vizier became cold and distant. It was with impatience and surprise that he listened to his "noble friend" who, it seemed, had never so much as learned from life that conversations were only conversations but that business is business and that every man must bear his own painful problems himself and resolve them as best he can contrive.

Daville collected all his strength and tried to be resolute, convincing and trenchant but he himself felt his mind and will weakening and flagging and, as it were, some irresistible current bearing away the handsome, smiling commander. Once or twice



It had so happened that the anonymous high official in question, being much concerned at the moment to hold on to his Austrian pay, had brought severe pressure to bear on the Vizier at Travnik. It had so happened that Ibrahim Pasha, quite unmanned and in fear of his life, had handed the matter over to the harsh and pitiless governor of the town, to whom the destruction of an honest man meant nothing, nothing at all and who, again by chance, happened at that particular moment to need some drastic example in order to demonstrate his power and scare the notables and commanders along the frontier.

Each of these personalities had worked independently of the rest and exclusively for himself, without any connexion with the commander's own person, but by working as they did, they had all combined, all the more effectively, to cast a halter round the commander's neck. Yet the whole affair had been quite accidental and unpremeditated.

Such was the fate of the Consul's unlucky *protégé*. As he looked into the humid darkness, Daville realized clearly what he had failed to grasp that morning from the impatient silence and the astonished glances he had received at the Residency.

And on the other side of Travnik, on the further bank, as it were, of that same darkness, Colonel von Mitterer was still awake and sitting in a circle of peaceful light, writing his report on the case of Ahmed Beg Cerić to his higher authorities. He was careful to underline his own meritorious part in the downfall of the commander of Novi, but not to overemphasize it, in order not to offend the commanding officer in Croatia and all the others who had worked to this end. "At present this restless and ambitious commander, our great opponent, is lying bound and under a capital charge in the fortress here. As matters stand it is impossible that he should save his head. According to my information, the Vizier is determined to have done with him. I do not wish to work specifically and overtly for this but you can believe me when I say that I shall do nothing which might hinder his having his neck finally wrung."

Next day at dawn the commander of Novi was shot in his sleep and was buried the same morning in the graveyard between the highroad and the river. A rumour was spread in the town that he had attempted to escape as they were bringing him on his way to Novi and that his guard had been obliged to fire on him.

Once again there lay before the Consul a sleepless night, with its leaden hours and the humiliating feeling of complete hopelessness, impotence and inability to defend his own cause. He opened the window, as if seeking help from outside. He took a deep breath and gazed into the darkness. Somewhere in that darkness was the grave of the gipsy who to his misfortune had met the commander on the bridge in front of the Citadel and called out "*Merhab*" to him humbly and in trepidation, since, gipsy though he might be, he had not the heart nor the effrontery not to greet a man who had once in his life conferred great benefit on him. And now he was lost in the darkness, without trial and without cause, and the young commander too. As if he could read more clearly in the dark than in the delusive light of day, Daville now saw plainly his own powerlessness and the commander's doom.

In Paris, during the Revolution, and in the course of the fighting in Spain he had many times seen deaths and disasters, the tragedies of innocent lives and fatal misunderstandings, but he had never yet seen, in this way, from close quarters, how an honourable man could fall headlong into ruin under the pressure of events. In corrupt conditions and in this kind of environment, in which blind chance, tyrannical will and the lowest impulses were in control, it was possible for a man who had been quite casually pointed at by someone's finger to be suddenly gripped by events, as by a whirlpool or like the whirling of dust by the wind, and to drown without help. And now it was this handsome, strong, wealthy commander who found himself all at once in a maelstrom of this kind. He had done nothing which frontier commanders had not done all their lives from time immemorial but purely by chance a chain of events had wound itself round him and tied itself into a fast bond.

It had so happened that in making his proposals for the extinction of the young commander at Novi the Austrian frontier commander had managed to reach an understanding with the Turkish higher authorities. It had so happened that at that particular moment those higher authorities were attaching great importance to the maintenance of peace on that frontier. It had so happened that Vienna had categorically demanded of their secret agent at the Porte that the commander should be removed.

Vizier of his own accord invited the French Consul for a conversation under any pretext. In this respect Daville left his rival von Mitterer far behind. The Austrian Consul was only received when he applied for an audience and the conversations with him were short, politely chilly and official.

Not even the fact that Napoleon's conclusion of peace with Russia had caused great disillusion at Constantinople and a strong indisposition towards the French was able to affect permanently the relations between the Vizier and the Consul. As always with the Turks, the transition was sudden and the surprise complete. As soon as he received the news from Constantinople, the Vizier had immediately grown cold. He had not invited Daville to talk with him: even when Daville himself asked to be received, he had answered him tersely and drily. But all this lasted only a short while and, as always, turned into its opposite. For no visible reason the Vizier relented, and the friendly talks and the exchanges of minor amiabilities began once more. Even the reproaches which the Vizier addressed to the Consul on this subject became no more than the ground for a joint melancholy moralizing on the instability of human relationships. Daville unloaded all the blame on England and Ibrahim Pasha had hated the English as much as the Russians ever since the day when, as Grand Vizier, he had experienced the attack of the English battle fleet on the Bosphorus.

In the end Daville began to grow accustomed to surprises and to these ebbs and flowings in the Turkish attitude towards him.

Von Mitterer's attempts to win the Vizier for himself with gifts and to squeeze Daville out remained fruitless. He procured a smart carriage from Slavonski Brod and presented it to the Vizier. It was the first real luxury carriage Travnik had ever seen. The Vizier accepted the gift with thanks. People went to the Residency to see the black, shinily lacquered *hintov*; but the Vizier himself remained unmoved and it was a great mortification to von Mitterer, (which, however, he concealed in his official reports) that Ibrahim Pasha never sat in the carriage presented to him and never drove in it. It continued to stand in the middle of the Residency courtyard, a cold, glittering, unwanted gift.

Daville was on fire with fever and dropping with sleeplessness and fatigue. As soon as he closed his eyes, he felt that he was alone in the world, ringed in by a conspiracy of the powers of Hell and fighting with his last strength and with outworn senses, in a mist and on a slippery slope.

He was torn with the thought that he must write reports at once to three destinations, Paris, Constantinople and Split. He must sit and write depicting his representations to the Vizier as a dramatic struggle for the reputation of France and ascribing his whole lack of success to unlucky circumstances.

Daville fell sick at the loss of the commander of Novi. When he got up again, he said to himself: it was in an evil hour you came to this country and now there is no retreat, but you must always keep in view that you cannot assess the actions of these people by your own standards nor react to them with your own sensibility; otherwise in a very short time you will collapse in a sorry state. With this resolution he set to work once again. In any case, in times like these one anxiety soon thrusts another into oblivion. New tasks and new problems beset the Consul. Seeing that his superiors did not attach to the downfall of the commander of Novi the same significance that he did himself in his isolation and bewilderment, Daville tried, for his own part, to obliterate this defeat within himself and to silence the painful questionings it had evoked in him. It was not easy to forget the rosy, girlish face of Ahmed Beg with the glistening teeth and clear brown eyes of a mountaineer and the smile of a man who is afraid of nothing. Nor was it easy to forget that silence of the Vizier's, before which the Consul had felt powerless, humiliated and unable to defend his rights and his country's cause. And yet, in face of the demands which new days brought with them, these things must be forgotten.

The Vizier at once became his old self again. He invited Daville, showed himself affable towards him, did him various favours and held his customary talks with him. Daville fostered his extraordinary friendship. Longer and longer grew the time they spent in intimate conversations which were frequently no more than a pessimistic soliloquy by the Vizier but in which Daville always managed in the end to press home the consular business for which he had come. There were days when the

It was one of those incredible surprises which one met with in the East. There was no connexion of any kind between a man's actual inner life and his written words.

The Consul's astonishment would have been still greater if he could have seen the Vizier immediately after the receipt of the news from Constantinople. The tents of the Vizier and his suite were on a level patch of ground below a deserted quarry. Here, even on these sultry nights it was always cool, since a gentle but steady breeze wafted the freshness of water and willows through the narrow valley all night long. The Vizier retired at once into his tent and allowed no one but his nearest and most devoted attendants near him. Tahir Beg gave orders for everything to be made ready for the return to Travnik but the Vizier's condition made it impossible even to think of such an arduous journey in the immediate future.

Having received the heavy news with calm, the Vizier without casting a single glance at anyone about him, pronounced with the same complete calm the prescribed text for the departed and invoked peace upon the soul of him whom he had loved more than anything or anyone in this world. Then, with the slow steps of a belated phantom of the night, he went to his tent and as soon as the heavy tent flap had closed behind him, he fell like a log upon his mattress and began to tear off his clothes and equipment like a man who is suffocating. His old servant, a man dumb from birth, tried in vain to undress him and put him to bed but the Vizier would not allow himself to be touched, as if any touch, even the lightest, caused him unspeakable pain. With convulsive movements he refused a glass of sherbet. He lay like a stone which had rolled down from a height, with closed eyes and lips compressed. The colour of his skin suddenly altered: it became yellow, then green, then an earthy brown, from the sudden effusion of gall. So he lay for some hours, speechless and motionless. Then before evening he began, first to moan softly, then to utter prolonged, even groans, with short, infrequent pauses between. If anyone had dared to pass by the tent, he would have thought that some weak, foolish lamb, which had just been born, had lost its way and was standing and bleating for its mother. But except for the Secretary and the old servant no one was allowed to come near or even to see or hear the Vizier from a distance.

About the same time Daville, who had far smaller means and far less influence with his Government, succeeded in obtaining from Paris as gifts for the Vizier a little telescope and an astrolabe, an instrument for gauging the positions and heights of stars on the horizon. The Consul was unable even to explain the use of the telescope, indeed it appeared to him that some of the parts were missing or defective; but the Vizier accepted the gift graciously. To him, in any case, everything the world contained was dead and meaningless and he valued things only for the person and intentions of him who gave them. The telescope was simply a pretext for fresh conversations about the stars and human destiny, which could be read from the stars, and about the changes and catastrophes which the stars foretell.

In the course of this very first year a new and grievous blow befell the Vizier which should have struck him down completely, in so far as there could, in general, be said to be any need to crush him further.

That summer the Vizier went off with a great escort to the Drina. His intention was to fortify the Bosnian troops by his presence for as long as possible and to prevent their returning prematurely into winter quarters in Bosnia. In this he might perhaps have had some success, but at Zvornik news reached him of a new *coup d'état* at Constantinople and of the tragic death of the former Sultan Selim III.

The courier who had brought the details of all that had happened in Constantinople at the end of July, not knowing that the Vizier was in the theatre of war, had come first of all to Travnik, whence he was at once directed to the Vizier at Zvornik. Daville had sent the Vizier by the same courier a box of lemons, with a few feeling words in which there was no mention of recent events at the capital but which were clearly intended as an expression of respect and sympathy for the Vizier in the calamity which had overtaken his master. When this same courier returned to Travnik, he brought a letter from the Vizier expressing thanks for the gift and saying only that the greatest pleasure was a present coming from a sincere friend and that "an angel of light guides the steps of the giver". Daville, who knew well what a heavy blow Selim's terrible death was for the Vizier, stood amazed and thoughtful at this calm and friendly letter.

are poor wretches, at odds with each other, who will bleed themselves white and then fall at our feet. No need to dirty one's hands there . . ."

Daville stared in amaze at this statue of grief which lied with such unruffled dignity. What the Vizier had said was in complete contradiction with the facts, but the calm and the dignity with which he said it were in themselves a weighty and a stubborn fact.

"You see!" Daville thought, as he had thought long since, while the interpreter was stringing out his concluding words, "You see! The course of events in our lives does not depend on us at all, or only to a very small extent, but the way in which we react to events does depend in large measure on us ourselves, so it is worth while to make the effort and to devote one's attention to it — yes, to that!"

Immediately after the Vizier's contemptuous words about the Serb revolt and the Bosnian army which was to suppress it, the conversation turned of its own accord to Selim's death. Here too neither the Vizier's voice nor his expression altered. His whole being was filled with a mortal grief that was beyond any mitigation.

The great Divan on the first floor was suddenly empty. Even the attendants with the pipes had vanished at an unseen sign. There were only the Vizier and the Consul and between them, a handsbreadth lower, with his legs gathered under him, his hands crossed and his eyes lowered, Davna, who turned himself completely into the quiet, singsong voice, almost a whisper, in which he spoke the translation for the Consul.

The Vizier asked Daville whether he had had any details of all that had taken place at Constantinople. The Consul said he had not and that he would like to have them as soon as possible, since all Frenchmen were distressed at the death of such a sincere friend and such a remarkable ruler as Sultan Selim had been.

"You are right," said the Vizier thoughtfully. "The late Sultan — peace be to him — who is now enjoying all the pleasures of Paradise, genuinely loved and prized your country and your Emperor. All right-thinking and noble men, without exception, have lost in him a great friend."

All day and all night the Vizier lay like this, refusing all help, never opening his eyes, and uttering, straight from the throat, that long drawn out, monotone cry of subdued, animal lament: "E — e — e — e — e!"

At dawn on the second day Tahir Beg managed to recall him to himself and persuade him to talk. When once the wrench was over, the Vizier quickly collected himself, dressed and became his old self. It was as if he put on again with his clothes his old slow speech and recovered his former economy of gesture. Even the greatest of misfortunes could work no further change in him. He wished to set off straightway but was obliged to travel slowly in short stages from one relay to another.

When the Vizier got to Travnik, Daville sent him yet another box of lemons as a gift of welcome, but he did not seek an audience, judging it better to leave the mourning Vizier to take his own decision on this point, although he ardently wished to see and listen to him and to report to his Ambassador at Constantinople his impressions of Selim's former Grand Vizier and the latter's utterances. Daville was doubly content with his shrewd decision when he learned that the Austrian Consul had asked at once for an audience and had been received, but in a cold and unfriendly manner, and that the Vizier had not answered a word to his enquiries about the happenings at Constantinople. A few days later Daville reaped the fruits of his wise restraint.

The Vizier invited the French Consul on the Thursday, ostensibly because he wished, on his return from the theatre of war, to inform him of the course of operations against the insurgents in Serbia. He received him cordially and did in fact begin by talking of what he had seen at the wars. The Vizier's narrative made it all appear trivial and insignificant. In a deep, dull voice he discoursed with equal contempt of the rebels and of the Bosnian army which had gone out against them.

"I saw for myself what it was needful for me to see and my presence in these outlying districts became unnecessary. The Russians who have been helping the rebels to conduct the operations have left Serbia. The rest are insubordinate, misguided *rayah* and it is beneath the dignity of the Ottoman Empire for a former Grand Vizier to come to blows with them direct. They



The Consul and his dragoman both went out as from a funeral vault. Davna was as pale as a corpse, with drops of cold sweat on his forehead. Daville said nothing all the way home; but he noted among his most fearsome experiences at Travnik that spectral movement of the living statue.

Nevertheless, the loss of the dethroned Sultan knit still more closely together the unhappy Vizier and the Consul who was an adept listener and knew how to take a restrained but intelligent part in the Vizier's dreary conversations.

Only a few days later the Consul was once more summoned to the Vizier. Ibrahim Pasha had received fresh news from Constantinople, from a servant who had been present at Selim's murder, and he obviously wished to talk to the Consul about it.

Outwardly, it was impossible to tell what had passed within the Vizier during those ten days but it could be seen from the way he spoke that he had begun to reconcile himself with the bereavement and to grow accustomed to the pain it caused him. He had now come to speak of this death as a chapter that was finally closed.

During the next fortnight Daville was three times with the Vizier, twice at the Divan and once they went to see the casting of cannon in the Vizier's new foundry. Each time the Consul came with a list of requests and current questions. All were dealt with rapidly and nearly all favourably. Immediately afterwards the Vizier passed, with a grim and passionate satisfaction, to the tragic murder of Selim and the causes and details of that event. His need to talk of this was great and irresistible and the French Consul was the only person whom he considered worthy of such a conversation. Daville supplemented and sustained it by a few tactful questions and showed the Vizier his sympathy. In this way the Vizier recounted to him all the particulars of Selim's last acts, and in fact, of his own tragedy too. It was clear that he felt a great and immediate need to expatiate on these details.

The movement in favour of the dethroned Sultan Selim III had been headed by Mustapha Bairaktar, one of the best commanders in the army, an upright but headstrong and inexperienced man. He had set out for Constantinople from Wallachia with his Albanian troops, his intention being to overturn the unworthy government and its Sultan Mustapha, to free Selim from his

The Vizier spoke as if the dead man were lying in the next room, quietly and in a hushed voice, but consistently keeping away from actual facts and details, as if he were avoiding the main, and the hardest, aspect of the matter.

"No one who did not know him from close to can have any notion what a loss this has been," said the Vizier. "He was a many-sided man, complete from every aspect. He sought the company of educated men. He himself, under the name Ilkhani (Inspired), wrote verses which have been used as models. And I remember the song which he composed on the morning he ascended the throne. 'The grace of God has allotted me the throne of Suleiman the Great,' is how it began, I think. But his real passion was for mathematics and architecture. He himself worked on the reform of the administration and the fiscal system. He personally visited the schools, examined the boys and distributed the prizes. He climbed upon buildings, with an ivory rule in his hand and supervised the method of work, the quality and value of the material. He wanted to know and see everything. He loved work, and he was sound in body, so strong and quick that with lance and sword he had no equal. I have seen him with my own eyes slice three rams with a single sweep of his sabre. They must have surprised him, by treachery, unarmed; with a sword in his hand he would have feared no man. Ah, he was too noble, too trustful and too easily confiding!"

Simply from the fact that he spoke of his beloved master in the past tense, it could be seen that his words referred to a dead man. Apart from this, as if from fear or superstition, he never so much as mentioned the death and removal of the Sultan.

He spoke quickly and absently as if he wished to stifle another, inner conversation within himself.

Davna translated quietly, trying to remain as inconspicuous as possible in voice and presence. At one moment during his concluding words, the Vizier seemed gently but suddenly to start, as if he had just discovered or just noticed the interpreter. He turned full towards him, slowly and stiffly like a figure manipulated by unseen hands, and fixed his terrible, dead glance, the gaze of a stone statue, on the interpreter, whose speech broke off, while his back bowed still lower.

It was the end of the conversation for that day.

was the fall of Selim III and he freed himself to some extent from this agony of his by retailing to a well-disposed stranger the whole drama, as it appeared according to his own conception of it.

The Consul, on his side, clearly perceived this conflict, and much against his will, he was compelled to follow it, even down to the details which caused him each time to shudder afresh.

In the struggle which took place, the Vizier went on, Selim managed to extricate himself and with one powerful blow he knocked down the stout Kislär Aga. He stood in the centre of the room striking out about him with his hands and feet. The black slaves leaped upon him, warding off his blows. One of them had a bow without an arrow and kept on trying to throw the bowstring over his victim's head in order to throttle him with it. "He had no sword; if he had had one, it would have been a very different matter," the Vizier repeated mournfully. In taking particular care to hold off the bowstring, Selim lost sight of the fallen Kislär Aga. The stout and powerful negro rose to his knees unobserved and with one swift movement seized Selim, who was standing astride, by his private parts. The Sultan cried out in pain and bent down so far that his face came near to the sweating, bloodstained face of the Aga. At this short range he could not draw back and hit the Aga, who threw himself down on the carpet without loosing his hold on his victim. The slave took advantage of this instant and managed to throw the bowstring over Selim's head. He twisted the string once or twice about the bow, tightening the noose about his neck more and more. The Sultan broke away, but with only half his strength, since he had suddenly grown faint with pain in the toils. His face changed colour, his mouth opened, his eyes started out. His hands clutched once or twice at the top of his neck, but painfully and feebly; then the whole of the man collapsed, bowed to the knees, then to the waist, then to the neck, then crashed beside the wall and there lay crumpled, half sitting, without a tremor, as if he had never lived nor fought in his own defence.

The body was at once laid upon a rug and carried on it before Sultan Mustapha, as on a stretcher.

Outside, before the closed gates, Mustapha Bairaktar battered and shouted impatiently: "Open, you bitches and sons of

seclusion in the Seraglio and to replace him on the throne. Everywhere he was well received and he reached Constantinople, where he was welcomed as a victor and a liberator. He managed successfully to get as far as the Seraglio itself and entered the first courtyard, but here the guards succeeded in shutting the great inner gate in his face. At this point the brave but simple and maladroit Bairaktar made a fatal error. He began to shout and to demand the immediate release of the dethroned but lawful Sultan, Selim. Hearing this and seeing that Mustapha Bairaktar was master of the situation, the stupid but cunning and cruel Sultan Mustapha gave orders that Selim should at once be killed. A slave girl betrayed the wretched Sultan who had just knelt for his afternoon prayer when the Chief Eunuch and his four assistants entered the apartment. For a moment they halted in confusion; then the Chief Eunuch threw himself upon the Sultan who at that moment was kneeling down and bowing his forehead upon the prayer-rug. The slaves helped the Aga, one seizing Selim by the arms and legs and the rest scattering the attendants with knives.

The Consul at once felt his gorge rising and, as he listened with only half his attention, he suddenly fancied that he had before him a madman and that the Vizier's inner mind was still more incredible and more deranged than his extraordinary outward appearance. Davna translated painfully, skipping sentences and missing out words.

"He's mad! Of that there can be no doubt," the Consul said to himself. "He's mad!"

But the Vizier continued his tale unwaveringly in a kind of intonation, as if he were not talking to the man beside him but was conducting some inner dialogue. His description grew more and more precise, careful and conscientious, even down to the least details, as if every particular of it were of exceptionally high importance, as if he were weaving a spell and by that spell saving the Sultan whom he had not been able to save. Driven on by this irrational but irresistible necessity, he was determined to repeat aloud everything which he had heard from the witness who had escaped and which now lay within his own mind. Clearly, the Vizier had passed through days of temporary insanity. It had become a kind of obsession, the cause and the kernel of which

good, even the brave Madame Daville lost her confidence and self-possession. She began to call in the doctors and all those who call themselves doctors and are considered by the world as such. The Davilles were then able to see what health and sickness implied for these people and what it meant to live and fall ill in this country. The doctors were: Davna, who belonged to the Consulate, Fra Luka Dafnić from the Guča Gora monastery, Mordo Atijas, a Travnik apothecary, and Giovanni Maria Cologne, the accredited physician of the Austrian Consulate. His attendance had an official character, and he formally announced that he came "on the instructions of the Austrian Consul-General, to place his professional knowledge at the disposal of the French Consul-General". He and Davna promptly fell to differences and disputes, both over diagnosis and over treatment. Mordo Atijas said nothing and Fra Luka asked leave to go to Guča Gora for some special herbs of his.

Actually, all these Travnik doctors were at a loss and displeased, since they had never had to treat such a small child. The range of their skill did not, generally speaking, include the uppermost and lowest limits of the human span. In these countries little children die or live at the whim of Chance, just as very old people expire or their life is prolonged for a little while. It is a question of the child's or old people's power of resistance and of the care shown them by those about them, and in the last resort, it depends on the will of Fate, against whom no doctors or medicines avail. Consequently persons such as these, who are completely enfeebled or are worn out with age and are unable to stand squarely on their own feet, are not in these parts the object of medical treatment or attention. And in this case had it not been a question of prominent persons of the highest rank, none of the doctors would have bothered himself with this small creature; and so their visits were more an expression of respect for the parents than an expression of real concern for the child. In this there was no great difference between Fra Luka and Mordo Atijas on the one hand and Davna and Cologne on the other, since even these two foreigners were penetrated with the ideas and habits of oriental countries. Their knowledge, in any case, was no deeper or more extensive than that of the other two.

In these circumstances Daville decided to take the child himself to Sinj, where there was a good and well-known French

bitches; release the true Sultan, Selim, or you'll not have a head left among you!"

Bairaktar's Albanians howled and shrieked as if to reinforce his shouts, and made ready to break in the heavy gate.

At this moment one of the deep, narrow windows, high inset on both sides of the gateway, was opened. The shutter of the window swung open slowly, as it was rusty and overgrown with creeper. In the half-opened window appeared a roll of matting from which a half-clad corpse slid out amid a dull shower of fine white plaster.

The first to run up was Mustapha Bairaktar. Before him, dead, bareheaded, with congested face and covered with bruises, lay Sultan Selim. They were all too late. Bairaktar had conquered but his victory had lost its value and its point. Evil and madness had triumphed over good and reason. Vice remained on the throne and disorder in the government and the state.

"Thus, sir, there perished the noblest ruler of the Ottoman Empire," the Vizier concluded, as if awakening, consoled, from the trance in which he had just been talking.

When he returned home after these conversations, Daville always reflected that no one would ever know how dearly he paid for his small successes and for the concessions he obtained from the Vizier. Even Davna was silent and could find no words or explanations.

## 12

This year, 1808, was clearly to be a year of losses and misfortunes of every kind. Instead of that damp Travnik season "which is neither autumn nor winter", the cold weather set in, prematurely and severely, at the beginning of November. At this time one of the Davilles' children unexpectedly fell ill.

This little son of the Consul's, the second of the three, was in his third year and had up till now been perfectly well and thriving, in contrast with his younger brother who had been born at Split during the journey out and had always been weakly. When the child first sickened, his mother treated him with *infusions* and home-made medicines, but when nothing did him any

The Austrian Consul attended the funeral with his wife and daughter and came to the Consulate to express his sympathy. Frau von Mitterer offered her services and talked much and with great emotion about children, sicknesses and death. Daville and his wife listened calmly and gazed, dry-eyed, with the look of people to whom every word of consolation is welcome but whom nobody can really help and who expect no help from anybody. The conversation turned into a long dialogue between Frau von Mitterer and Desfossés and finally ended up as a monologue by Anna Maria on Fate. She was pale and solemn. Perturbations and emotions were her native element. Her brown hair sprang to life in unruly curls. Her great eyes shone with unnatural brilliance in her pale face and this brilliance lighted up their grey depths, so that it was difficult to look into her eyes continuously or without a qualm. Her face was full and pale, her neck without a wrinkle, her bosom like that of a full-grown girl. In this circle of death and sorrow, between her sallow, careworn husband and their fragile, silent daughter, she shone still more and overwhelmed with her marvellous, dangerous beauty. Desfossés looked at her strong, tapering hands. The skin of these hands was pale but on the back and at the joints it was suffused with a dull, pearly lustre, as if with the hardly perceptible reflection of an unseen, pure white flame. Something of this white gleam hung about his eyes the whole of that day. And when he saw Anna Maria in the church at Dolac, where the Requiem mass was said for the soul of the dead child, it was at her hands that he looked first. But on this occasion they were both in black gloves.

After a few restless days everything once more resumed its previous course. Winter closed all doors and drove people into their warm houses. Once more there were no relations between the two Consulates. Even Desfossés cut short his walks. His conversations with Daville before lunch and dinner were now milder and friendlier and turned for the most part on subjects in which their different ways of thought could not find expression. As generally happens on the days immediately succeeding a funeral, they avoided talking of the loss and death of the child, but since the thought of these could not be banished, they talked much of the child's illness, and of health and sickness in general, and more particularly of medicine and doctors in this dreary country.

army doctor. The Travnik "doctors", in accordance with their own ideas, were resolutely and unanimously opposed to this rash and extraordinary decision; but the Consul insisted.

In the cold, which had suddenly increased, and over icy roads, the Consul set out, escorted by a kavass and three grooms. He himself carried the sick child in his arms, well wrapped up. The strange procession started from the Consulate at dawn. Just as they passed the Karaula hills, the boy expired in his father's arms. They spent the night at an inn with the dead child and returned next day along the road to Travnik. They arrived in front of the Consulate at dusk.

Madame Daville had put the younger son to bed and was just whispering a prayer "for those who are on the road" when she was distracted by the clatter of horses and by a knocking at the gate. She started but found herself unable to move from the spot and waited there for Daville, who came into the room, carrying the swaddled child in his arms, with exactly the same tenderness and care. He laid the dead child down, threw off the full black cape which still radiated cold, and then put his arms about his wife, who, herself all icy cold and seemingly dazed, was murmuring the last words of the prayer, in which she had just entreated for the child's return to health.

The Consul was so frozen and so shattered by the two days' journey that he could scarcely keep on his feet. His hands, which for hours had held first the sick, then the dead child in the same position, were painfully numbed. But now, forgetting all this, he embraced her frail body with a speechless tenderness which had in it an infinity of love for his wife and for the child. He closed his eyes and let himself drift: it seemed to him that by forgetting his weariness and overcoming his pain in this way, he still continued to carry his child along the road to health and that it would not die so long as he carried it like this through the world, with pain and anguish. And this poor soul in his arms was crying gently and quietly, crying like a woman who was brave and utterly without a thought of herself.

Desfossés stood at a distance, unwanted and at a loss, and gazed with astonishment and incomprehension at the unimagined transfiguration of an ordinary, average man.

Next day, in sunny weather and a dry frost, little Jules-François-Amynte Daville was buried in the Catholic graveyard.



We have already got to know Davna as interpreter and as a temporary officer at the French Consulate. Even when he was with Mehmed Pasha, Davna had not much practised his medical skill. The style of "Doctor" had served him, as it had so many other foreigners, only as a cloak for the pursuit of all kinds of other business in which he showed a great deal more knowledge and ability. He was now happy and content with his new situation, for which he had both liking and aptitude. It seemed that he had in his youth studied medicine a little at Montpellier but very little medical knowledge remained with him. He had no love for people and no confidence in Nature. Like most westerners who fall under the influence of conditions in the East and grow used to life among the Turks, he had become infected with a profound pessimism and with a universal doubt. Sick men and sound men were for him two worlds with no practical link between them. Convalescence he looked upon merely as a temporary condition, not as a transition from human sickness to human health, since according to his ideas no such transitional stage existed. A man was born, or became, sick and that was his portion in this life. All the other distresses, such as pain, expense, treatment, doctors and other deplorable things, were no more than a natural accompaniment of that fact. Hence he much preferred dealing with the sound rather than the sick. Severe illnesses filled him with repulsion and a long illness he took, in some degree, as a personal insult; he considered that invalids of this kind ought to make up their minds — left or right?, that is to say, between health and death.

In so far as he had doctored generally the Turkish master whom he served, he had appeared to do so less by virtue of his knowledge or through the agency of his more or less harmless medicines than by the exertion of a powerful will and by ruthless boldness. His influential patients he used to flatter skilfully, praising their strength and endurance, calling forth their vanity and their will to resist the disease or, by suggestion, making little of the disease itself and its importance. This came to him all the more easily since he was in the habit of flattering his master with the same persistence and assiduity when he was well, only in a different way and along different lines. He very soon grasped the importance of flattering patients and the powerful effect of frightening them, and in general, the force of a kind or a sharp

Innumerable and manifold are the surprises which await an occidental who is suddenly plunged into the East and obliged to live there, but one of the greatest and most painful surprises discloses itself in questions of health and disease. For a man of the west the life of the body is suddenly revealed in a completely new light. In the West sickness exists in various forms, each with its own terror, but always as something to be overcome and mitigated, or at least concealed from the sight of the healthy, jolly, workaday world by a special arrangement on the part of the community, by conventions or by the consecrated forms of social life. Here in the East, on the other hand, sickness is, as it were, treated as nothing in the least exceptional. It manifests and develops itself side by side with health and in alternation with it: it is to be seen, heard and felt at every step. Here a man treats himself for sickness as naturally as he feeds himself and falls sick as naturally as he lives. Sickness is the other, harder, half of life. Epileptics, syphilitics, lepers, hystericals, idiots, hunchbacks, cripples, stammerers, blind men, the mutilated, all swarm in broad daylight, creep and crawl, begging alms or else defiantly silent and bearing their hideous deformities almost with pride. It is a great blessing that the women, especially the Moslem women, hide themselves away and wrap themselves up; otherwise the number of sick folk to be met with would be as many again. So Daville and Desfossés always reflected when they saw some peasant coming down into Travnik along a steep country lane, leading his horse by the bridle with a woman jogging upon it, all swathed in her mantle, a bundle of unknown sickness and pain.

But it is not only the poor who fall ill. Sickness is here the poor man's lot but also the rich man's scourge. Upon the stock of wealth, as upon that of poverty, the same flower blooms: sickness. Even the Vizier's Residency, when it is seen at close quarters and has grown familiar, is not much different in this respect from the poverty and simplicity which are to be viewed in the back alleys on market days. Their manner of being ill may be different, but their conception of illness is the same.

On the occasion of the Daville child's illness, Desfossés had a chance of becoming acquainted with all four of Travnik's doctors. These were, as we have seen, Davna, Cologne, Mordo Atijas and Fra Luka Dafnić.

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in Travnik as one of the first victims of the great plague in the middle of the last century; his son had taken over the shop and had passed it on, twenty years ago, to Mordo himself. There were preserved in the family books and notes by famous Arab and Spanish doctors, which the Atijases had brought with them when they had left Andalusia as exiles and they had been handed on from one generation to another as a secret treasure. For more than twenty years Mordo had been sitting at his counter, every day God sends except the Sabbath, with legs tucked under him, back bent and head bowed, always busy about his customers or his powders, herbs and potions. The shop was like a big wooden box, crammed from top to bottom; it was so narrow and low that Mordo could lay his hand on any article without rising from his place. So he sits in his shop, winter and summer, always the same, in the same clothes and the same attitude, a huddled lump of silence which neither drinks coffee nor smokes tobacco nor takes part in any of the conversations or jests of the bazaar.

A customer appears, either a sick man or someone from a sick man's family, sits on the edge of the narrow counter and says something. Mordo then whispers his opinion with invisible lips through his bushy black beard and whiskers, gives the man the medicine and the change. It is impossible to lure him into any conversation. He never talks more than is absolutely necessary, even with invalids about their complaints. He listens to them patiently and gazes silently at them with lacklustre eyes out of that forest of hair, which as yet has not one grey hair in it, and to all their expositions he replies always with the same stereotyped sentences, of which the last is this: "The treatment lies in my hands but health in God's". This puts an end to any further conversation and makes it clear to the customer that he must take the thing and pay or "love it and leave it".

"Oh well, I'll take it. Whatever it is I'll take it. I'd take poison," says the customer by way of excuse, having come as much for a grouse and a chat as for medicine.

But Mordo is implacable. He wraps up the medicine in blue paper, lays it before the sick man and has already reached out for some small piece of work which he had just put aside when the customer appeared.

word spoken at the right moment and in the right place. Rough and inconsiderate with the great majority of people, he kept his whole attention and all his kind words for the influential and the great. In this he was uncommonly smart and skilful.

Such was César d'Avenat's way as a doctor.

Mordo Atijas was his complete opposite, a taciturn little Jew who had a shop in the lower market where he sold not only medicines and directions for treatment but everything from spectacles and writing materials to potions for childless women, dyes for wool and good advice of all kinds.

The Atijas family were the oldest Jewish family in Travnik. They had lived there for more than a hundred and fifty years. Their first house had been outside the town in a damp and narrow gully through which there flowed one of those nameless streams which fall into the Lašva. It was a basin within the Travnik basin, almost completely sunless, full of damp and rubble, overgrown on all sides with elder and clematis. Here they were born and died, generation after generation. Later they managed to leave this damp, dim, unhealthy corner and to move up into the town, but all the Atijas family kept something about them of their earlier home, they were all small and pale, as if they had grown up in a cellar, they were all silent and reserved. They lived modestly, one might say unnoticeably, even though as time went on they thrived and grew rich. And there was always one of the family who dealt in medicines and doctoring.

Of all the doctors in Travnik, and those who accounted themselves such and as such were called to the Consulate, there is least to be said about Mordo Atijas. What indeed can be said of a man who never says anything, never goes anywhere, never makes any friends and never asks for anything, but simply looks after his business and his home? The whole of Travnik and all the villages around knew Mordo and his shop with its medicines but that was the one and only thing they did know about him.

He was a little man, all overgrown with beard, whiskers, locks and eyebrows, and clad in a striped kaftan and baggy blue trousers. As far as is known in his family, all their forebears have been doctors and apothecaries, back to the time when they lived in Spain. The Atijases had continued to ply this trade as exiles and refugees, first at Salonica and then at Travnik. Mordo's grandfather, Isaac the Doctor, had died here

pointing with his finger to the centre of his chest. He would like to repeat a few times more what is hurting him, but Mordo interrupts him drily and conclusively:

"There's nothing there. You can't have a pain there."

The peasant asserts that he has in fact got a pain just there, but nevertheless moves his finger a little to the right.

"Yes, it hurts me . . . how can I explain? It hurts, just so. It starts here, then the pain goes, if you'll excuse me, it all goes . . ."

Eventually the sick man gives way a little, Mordo gives way a little and they agree on the spot in which the pain more or less permanently resides. Then Mordo asks him in a brief and businesslike manner whether he has any rue in his garden and orders him to pound this herb in a bowl, to add a little honey, to sprinkle the whole with a powder which he will give him, to roll three pellets of it between his palms and swallow them before sundown.

"Do this every day for eight days, from Friday to Friday, and your pain and your illness will go away. Give me two groschen, and good luck to you!"

The peasant, who has so far been staring and moving his lips in an effort to remember the prescription, suddenly forgets everything, even the pain which was the cause of his coming and clutches at the place where he keeps the linen bag with the money. There begins a slow hauling forth, with a good deal of puffing and reluctance, an untying and a counting out, and finally a painful paying over.

Once again Mordo sits, a slight unmoving figure, bent over a new customer and the peasant slowly leaves the bazaar and departs along the banks of the stream to his high-lying village of Paklarevo. On one side of his chest is a pain that never eases; on the other, in a pocket, is Mordo's powder, wrapped up in blue paper. And diffused through his whole being, like another, separate pain, is the pain of regret for the money which looks as if it had been thrown away, the pain of distrust and fear lest he may have been cheated. So he goes on his way, due west into the sunset, utterly listless and bowed down, for there is no creature as miserable and bewildered as a sick peasant.

There is, however, one visitor with whom Mordo converses longer and more freely and with whom he does not mind losing

On market days a crowd of peasants and peasant women gathers in front of Mordo's shop. One sits on the counter and whispers with Mordo; the rest stand in the street and wait. They have come for medicine or they have brought herbs to sell; they talk quietly, enjoy themselves, explain their business, go off, come back. Only Mordo stays in his place, unmoving, cold and silent.

The older peasant women who come for spectacles are particularly vocal and difficult to please. First of all they recount at length how until quite recently they were able to thread even the finest needle and how ever since this winter, owing to some cold or other, their eyes have begun to get dim so that they can hardly even see to knit. Mordo is looking at a woman of forty, whose sight is naturally beginning to go; he calculates the breadth of her face and the thickness of her nose, takes out of a round black box some spectacles with tin frames and puts them to the woman's eyes. The woman looks first at her hands, turning them palms upward, then downward; then she takes a bundle of wool which Mordo hands her saying "Can you see? Or can't you?" Even this he mutters through his teeth, making as little noise as possible.

"I can see, I can see well. It's wool, but it looks somehow a long way away, as if it were away at the end of the market," says the peasant woman hesitatingly.

Mordo takes out another pair of spectacles and asks her: "Better?", sparing further expense of words.

"Yes, it's better and it isn't better. Now there's a sort of mist in front of my eyes, a kind of smoke, a kind of . . . something."

Placidly Mordo takes out a third kind of spectacles, and these are the last. The woman must either see with these and buy them or "love it and leave it". Not for love or money will she be able to get another word out of Mordo.

Another patient arrives, a cripple, a pale, wasted peasant from the hills, from the village of Paklarevo. Mordo asks him in his inaudible voice with the Spanish accent, what is wrong with him.

"There's something like a red-hot coal in my middle — good health to you — and it hurts, it hurts . . ." says the peasant



Hippocrates like the "Sultan" and the "Sultan", who is a dim print on cheap, soft paper, no longer looks like anything at all and only Fra Luka can exactly distinguish his sword and his helmet and can always clearly make out the warlike look he had fifty years ago.

While he was still quite a young novice Fra Luka had shown an inclination and a gift for medical knowledge. Seeing this and knowing how great was the need for a good and skilful doctor among the people and the Brethren, the monastery authorities of that time sent the young man to the School of Medicine at Padua. But the very next year, at the first change of the ruling authority, a new and hostile set of superiors found that this was unsuitable for Fra Luka and far too expensive for the Order and brought him back to Bosnia. When, two years later, the previous superiors were re-elected, they sent the young friar to Padua for the second time to complete his medical studies; but after a year the opposition once more came into power and annulled everything which had been done earlier and, among other things, they once again, out of contrariness, brought Fra Luka back from Padua to Guča Gora.

With such knowledge as he had been able to collect and such books as he had succeeded in procuring, Fra Luka had then established himself in this cell and had set himself passionately to the study and collection of medicines and lovingly to the healing of men. This passion had never left him and this love had never grown cold.

All is order and peace in this cell, about which the tall, thin, shortsighted "doctor" moves noiselessly. Fra Luka's thinness has become a byword throughout the Province. ("There are two things even the most learned *ulema* do not know — what the earth rests on and what Fra Luka's habit hangs on.") On this tall, lanky body there stands, erect and lively, a fine head with blue eyes, having a certain exaltation and a slight vagueness in them, a crown of sparse white hair on a regular skull, and a fine ruddy skin beneath which the blue, branching veins can be seen. He has remained brisk and active to the verge of old age. "That man does not walk, he flashes by like a sword," one of the guardians of the monastery said of him; and in truth, this man with the smiling glance and the quick, soundless movements has never known a moment's rest. His long, spotless,

a few minutes and an extra word or two. This is Fra Luka Dafić, better known as "the Doctor". Fra Luka used to work and live on the best of terms with Mordo's father, David, and for twenty years he has been the inseparable friend and intimate of Mordo himself. When, as a young man, he was on parochial duties, he used to come to Travnik whenever he could and here he would first see Mordo to the shop and then go back to his parish priest at Dolac. The Travnik bazaar had long grown used to the sight of Mordo and Fra Luka with their heads together whispering something or other or looking through herbs or medicines.

Fra Luka was a native of Zenica, but he entered the monastery at Guča Gora as a child, when all his family had died of the plague. Here, except for short breaks, he has spent his whole life among medicines and medical books and apparatus. His cell is full of pots, jars and boxes and about the walls and on the beams dried herbs, twigs and roots are hung in bags or in bundles. In the window is a big tub with leeches in clear water, and another, smaller tub with scorpions in oil. Beside the couch, which is covered with an old burnt, stained, patched rug, stands an earthenware pan of charcoal, with a pot of herbs always on it. In corners and on shelves are fragments of rare woods, small and large stones, the skins and horns of animals. But with all this, the cell is always clean, well-aired and welcoming and smells as often as not of juniper berries or mint tea.

On the walls are three pictures. Hippocrates, St. Aloysius Gonzaga and the portrait of an unknown knight in armour, with a vizor and a great plume on his head. Where Fra Luka got this picture from and what it has to do with him no one has ever been able to find out. Once, when the Turks carried out an inspection of the monastery and finding nothing to object to, fixed on this picture, they were told that it was the portrait of some Sultan or other. An argument developed as to whether Sultans could or should have their portraits taken, and as the picture was almost completely faded and the Turks were uninterested, there the matter was left. Those pictures have hung there now for more than half a lifetime, and though they have never been very bright, with time they have now lost their colour completely so that Saint Aloysius looks like Hippocrates and

be guessed at, which a man may at times be able to turn to his service but which he can never master. What can a man in his position do, a man before whom all this lies clear and to whom it is given, by God's dispensation, to work at an inscrutable and unfathomable task, the searching out of medicines and the healing of diseases? What can he seize and hold in his memory of this picture which at times shines before him, clear, intelligible and close at hand, within his grasp, and at times grows dark and wavers like a senseless flurry of snowflakes in a limitless night? How is he to find a foothold in this dazzling whirl of lights, in this apparent chaos of interwoven, intersecting influences and blind forces and elements? How is he to clutch any, even the grossest, clues and link effects with their causes?

This was Fra Luka's only preoccupation and his principal thought, apart from the duties of his Order and of his monastic state. It was this which made him so vague and distracted, as thin and slender as a strung wire. It was this which made him hurl himself with such passion upon a blade of grass or upon a patient, whatever they might be, however they might look and by whatever name they might be called.

Fra Luka firmly believed that there are as many varieties of healing force in nature as there are diseases among men and animals. And the one exactly corresponds with the other down to the least particular. These are high calculations, beyond proof or measurement, but there can nevertheless be no doubt that they are accurate and that they work out, somewhere yonder in that land beyond human sight. And these healing forces are to be found, as the ancients taught, "in herbs, in words and in stones", *in herbis, in verbis et in lapidibus*. Privately, Fra Luka had the boldness to believe — although he never admitted this even to himself — that every hurtful change in the human body can be countered, at least in theory, since the sickness and its cure both exist and dwell together in the world, though they may lie far, often inaccessibly far, from each other. If the physician succeeds in bringing them into contact, the sickness retreats; if he fails to do so, it masters and destroys the organism in which it has appeared. No failures and no disappointments can shake this secret belief. With this silent conviction within him, Fra Luka approached every cure and every case. It must

wrinkled fingers have all day long been sorting out innumerable small things, scraping, pounding, smearing, tying, marking, glueing, among his boxes and shelves. For to Fra Luka nothing is unimportant, superfluous or unnecessary. Under those lean fingers and his smiling, peering eyes everything comes alive, talks and seeks its place among his medicines or at least among his rare or necessary things.

By dint of considering day in and day out, year in and year out, the herbs, minerals and living creatures about him, their changes and their movements, Fra Luka has come more and more clearly to the conclusion that in the world as we see it two things alone exist — growth and decay — and that they are intimately and indissolubly bound up with each other and are eternally and everywhere in action. All phenomena around us are merely different phases of this endless, complex, perpetual ebb and flow; they are merely illusions, transitory moments which we arbitrarily detach and distinguish and call by definite names, such as health, sickness and death — all of which, equally, do not exist. Only growth and decay exist, at different stages and under different aspects. The whole art of medicine consists in recognizing, seizing and turning to advantage the forces making for growth, "as the sailor makes use of the winds" and in eluding and diverting all those forces which serve decay. Wherever a man manages to catch hold of this force, he recovers and sails on: wherever it escapes his grasp, he founders, simply and past holding; and in the great invisible account of growth and decay one force is transferred from one side of the ledger to the other.

Such is Fra Luka's picture of the world, in outline; in detail it is of course far more difficult and more complicated. Every living being, every blade, every disease, every season of the year, every day and every minute has likewise its own growth and its own decay. And all these are kneaded together, bound by innumerable obscure ties each to each; and the whole works and seethes, quivers and streams, day and night, deep under the earth, everywhere upon the earth and high in the air, right up to the planets, all according to the twofold law of growth and decay, which it is so hard to grasp and follow.

All his life Fra Luka has been sunk in ecstasy at his vision of the world and at the perfection of a harmony which can only

smiled and while breathing with difficulty, he said to the assembled Brothers:

"Brethren, all the monastery accounts are in order, both the credit and the cash. The Vicar knows them all in detail. And now bless you and remember me in your prayers. And know that two things have finished me off: my asthma and my doctor."

So Dembo jested and even in death exaggerated in his jesting.

But that was all long ago, "in Dembo's time", when Fra Luka was younger and nimbler and while those of his own generation were still living, almost none of whom are still alive today, for he entered his eighty-first year on St. Ivo's day this summer. Fra Luka has long since forgiven the Brothers for not having kept him longer at Padua and for never having given him as much as he needed for books and experiments; and they, in the course of time, have stopped teasing him so much for his extraordinary way of life, his craze for medicine and his friendship for Mordo Atijas. It is now Fra Luka's practice to go off to Travnik, and sit down with Mordo on his counter, exchanging facts and experiments, and bartering herbs and roots for sulphur or lapis lazuli, since nobody knows how to dry lime flowers or preserve willow-herb, St. John's wort or milfoil as well as Fra Luka. But the Brothers have long grown used to this "friendship between the Old and New Testament".

The most frequent cause of his occasional tiffs with the Brothers, his visiting and treating patients outside the monastery, is now much diminished. Once it was the source of continual disaster to the monastery and the only cause of really serious dissension between Fra Luka and his higher authorities. Even then Fra Luka did not seek out patients among the laity, and practically never among Moslems: it was the Moslems who sought him out, and sometimes called him in and entreated his help, and still more often ordered him to come and hauled him off to the patient with policemen. From these visits of Fra Luka's both he himself and the monastery derived a good many headaches and a good deal of loss and inconvenience. It sometimes happened that he would be called in and brought to cure some ailing Moslem or Moslem woman, and then he and the monastery would be blamed if the patient took a turn

be said that he himself assisted this inexplicable belief of his by swiftly and irrevocably forgetting, like many doctors, every patient who died or whom he failed to cure and remembering, even fifty years later, every case he succeeded in curing.

Such was Fra Luka Dafnić, the doctor. He was a fervent and incorrigible friend to the sick part of humanity; he had as friends the whole of nature, and only two enemies: friars and mice.

So far as the Brethren were concerned, that was an old story and a long one. The generations changed and in many things they differed from each other; but in one thing they were united, in their depreciation and condemnation of Fra Luka's medical skill. Ever since they had sent him to Padua as a lad and brought him back again, and sent and recalled him yet again, he had lost, utterly and for ever, all hope of finding any comprehension or aid among his colleagues. Once the Guardian of the monastery Fra Martin Dembić, commonly known as Dembo, told the following story about Fra Luka's relations with the Brothers.

"You see this 'doctor' of ours? When he prays to God with the Brothers in the choir, his thoughts are not the same as theirs. While they are uttering the same prayer, Fra Luka is thinking: O God, instruct and soften the hearts of these wicked brothers of mine, that they may not hinder me at every step in my good and useful work. Or, if Thou canst not do that — for I know that the necks of these Brothers are stiff even for God's hand — then at least endue me with holy patience that without hatred or hard words I may bear with them as they are and help them in sickness by my skill which they despise and condemn. — And the Brothers, on their side, think: O God, enlighten the intelligence of our Fra Luka, cure him of his grievous sickness, of physicking and physic. Blessed be all the little aches Thou sendest us (since one has to die of something), only take Thou from off our necks this fellow who wants to cure us of them."

Generally speaking, to Dembo, who was a witty, forceful and remorselessly critical but excellent elder of the monastery and a paragon of his Order, Fra Luka had for many years offered a subject for endless jests and anecdotes. And yet, like so many others, he was destined to die in Fra Luka's arms. In fact, even at that last moment, when he was grimacing with pain, Dembo

When Fra Luka arrived, the woman had already been for more than a day in a state of complete collapse, all huddled together, and no one could move her from her moody silence. At first she would not even turn her head. But, at one moment, raising her eyelids ever so slightly, she caught sight of the Friar's heavy sandals, then the skirt of his habit and the white cord which the friars use as a girdle; then her gaze went slowly and sullenly on up Fra Luka's thin and lanky form and it took her a long time to reach his grey head and meet his smiling blue eyes. Then, all of a sudden, the woman burst out into unexpected, crazy, ceaseless laughter. In vain the friar soothed her with words and gestures. As he left Miralem's house he could still hear behind him her dreadful laughter echoing from the ground-floor.

Next day the police took Fra Luka in chains to prison. The Guardian of the monastery was promptly informed: "Old Miralem accuses him of having put a spell on his daughter-in-law. For two days now the girl has laughed without stopping; she is disturbing the whole house." The Guardian showed that this could not possibly be so, that a physician's duty is to heal, if he can, and that spells and enchantments were unlawful for friars. It was in vain that at the same time he distributed largess to right and left, five groschen to one man, ten to another. He was only told that the doctor's case looked extremely black, because the daughter-in-law had related some tale of his having secretly given her to drink "something thick and black like axle-grease" and had struck her twice upon the forehead with a great cross, since when she had been unable to check this laughter which tormented her without ceasing.

All at once, just as everything looked so grim and hopeless, Fra Luka was unfettered and released as if nothing had occurred. It seems that on the fourth day the woman suddenly calmed down and then went off into quiet floods of tears. She called her father-in-law and her husband and announced that in her fits of insanity she had maligned the friar; she admitted that he had never given her any medicine at all and that he had carried no cross with him but had only spread out his hands over her and prayed God after the manner of his own religion, and that that had now made her better.

for the worse or died. And even when the cure succeeded and the patient's family, well contented, made a present to Fra Luka, there were always idle and malicious Turks who found fault with his having entered a Moslem house. There were always witnesses to prove that the Friar had been summoned and had come on good and honourable business, but until this was proved and justified and the complaint rebutted, the monastery was caused trouble and anxiety and expense. So the Brothers never let Fra Luka go and take a case in a Moslem house until the house in question had obtained a permit from the authorities, stating clearly in writing that the people had called him in of their own free will and that the authorities had nothing against it. Even with all these precautions, things did not always end without trouble and argument. There were cases in plenty when treatment was successful and pious and grateful people showered thanks and gifts on Fra Luka and the monastery.

One Beg, of the humbler, country kind but a stout-hearted and influential person, whom Fra Luka had healed of a neglected wound below the knee, used to say to the friar whenever he saw him, "When I stand up on my feet each morning, I mention your name after God's". And as long as he lived, this Beg protected the monastery and the Brothers and acted as their guarantor and sponsor when need arose.

A rich Moslem from Turbe, whose wife Fra Luka had saved, never said anything about it to anyone (since one does not talk of women), but every year, after the Feast of the Assumption, he used to send the monastery some two okes of honey and sheepskin with orders "to give them to the 'holy man' who heals the sick".

But there were contrary cases of black ingratitude and diabolical malice. The monastery long remembered the case of Mustaj Beg Miralem's daughter-in-law. Some sort of illness had taken the young woman and she could find no rest or relief anywhere. She simply lay writhing and gnashing her teeth day and night or again would lie for days without moving or speaking and would see nobody and eat nothing. The people of the house did everything anyone advised but nothing availed, neither magicians, nor hodjas nor charms. And the woman wasted away from day to day. At last the husband's father himself, old Miralem, sent to the monastery for the "doctor" Friar.



of the town, treating the sick, administering confession and communion to the dying, burying the dead, helping and counselling those who were on the way to recovery. Even his brother friars acknowledged this and the fame and reputation of the "doctor" were firmly established among the Moslems. But anyone who lives long outlives everything, even his own deserts. After pestilence and calamity came good and peaceful years, things changed and were forgotten, they were no longer heeded and they faded away. And through all this, the successes and the failures, the eulogies and the insults, the disasters and the victories, Fra Luka alone remained the same, unaltered and unshakable, with his absent-minded gaze, his thin smile, his lightning movements and his faith in the mysterious relation between medicines and diseases. Knowing no other life but that of medicine and medical work, for him everything in the world had its plan and its reason for existing — sickness and hurt, the Guardian's anger, misunderstandings and slanders. A blessing even, in the last resort, on his own arrest and on the thought that he no longer had those uncomfortable irons on his legs and need not always be worrying that they might be spoiling his medicines up there at the monastery or killing off his leeches, that the Brothers might be ransacking and throwing away his bundles and packets.

And yet whenever these "mighty adversaries" of his, of whom at times, though only for a moment, he complained to himself — whenever any of these Brothers fell ill, Fra Luka treated and tended them devotedly and with all his heart, and advised them and worried over them when they were well. As soon as one of them had the mildest cough, Fra Luka would set a pot of herbs on his brazier and himself brought him hot, aromatic tea to his cell and made him drink it. There were peppery friars, wilful, grumpy and reserved "old uncles", who would not hear of medicine or "the doctor" and drove him from their cells or laughed at him and his doctoring, but Fra Luka would not let himself be put out or put off. He went straight through all the jokes and taunts as if he had not heard them and persistently begged the sick friars to take treatment and to look after themselves: he entreated them, coaxed and bribed them into taking the medicine which he had taken such trouble to prepare and had often been at some expense to procure.

There the matter rested. Only for a long while after the Brothers were annoyed with Fra Luka. Fra Mijo Kovačević who was Guardian at the time and had the most trouble and worry over Fra Luka's case, said to him afterwards in the refectory before them all:

"Now listen, Fra Luka. Either you must have done with these silly Moslem wenches of yours or I shall take to the woods and you can take on and be both doctor and Guardian. We can't go on like this."

And angrily and solemnly he offered him the keys.

Nevertheless, everything settled down and was forgotten. All that remained was an entry by the Guardian in the monastery register of fines and expenses.

"On January 11 the prison officer came with a writ to the effect that Fra Luka Dafnić, the doctor, (ill luck to him!) had given Miralem's daughter-in-law certain pernicious pills... Paid as damages, to the Cadi and the Emin, Gr. 148."

But later years too were not without their difficulties, due to Fra Luka's medical practice. In the monastery these were forgotten but they stand recorded in the register of fines, expenses and *ex gratia* payments, in which there remain a good many notes concerning Fra Luka.

"To Fra Luka's treating a Turk. Gr.48  
To the doctor. Gr.20"

Somewhere here were set down, finally, the number and the date of the order by which the monastery authorities absolutely forbade "all praying God over any Turks and Turkesses whatsoever or the giving of any medicines whatsoever", even though they had a permit from the Turkish authorities for it. But immediately below yet another fine is noted:

"To Fra Luka's not having gone to a patient. Gr. 70."

And so it went on regularly, from year to year.

Twice during Fra Luka's long life the plague ravaged Travnik. People sickened, died, fled to the mountains. The bazaar closed and many houses were deserted for ever. The nearest ties were loosened and all respect fell off. In both epidemics Fra Luka showed himself great and fearless as a doctor and as a friar of his Order. He went round the plague-stricken districts

or how to restore wine which has gone off. Here, side by side with a prescription for jaundice and for "the fever which does not come from jaundice", there was written down, from Italian sources, "how miners extract ore in India and other places" or "how to make the wine called vermouth, which is good for the strengthening of the liver". Everything Fra Luka had collected during the course of years, in the way of knowledge and facts, from old-fashioned pharmacopoeias down to Mordo's recipes and those of old peasant women, was contained in these brochures. Yet here too Fra Luka met with the ingratitude of his own brethren and with many disappointments. Some made their copies carelessly; others from ignorance and inattention corrupted or left out single words and even whole sentences; others again added to particular receipts disparaging remarks about medicine or even about the doctor personally. But Fra Luka himself laughed at these remarks whenever he came across them; he consoled himself with the thought that the utility of this work of his on the prescription books to the people at large and to the Brothers was greater than the hurt and pain caused to him by the carelessness and lack of understanding among his brethren.

There was yet another, more innocent, hindrance to Fra Luka's work, namely, as we have said before, mice. There were in fact a large number of mice in the old, rambling monastery building. The Brothers asserted that Fra Luka's cell, which was like Mordo's shop in Travnik with its ointments and plasters of all kinds, was the chief reason why the mice collected so in the building. Fra Luka, on his side, complained yet again that owing to the age of the building and the untidiness of the cells there was a multiplication of mice which made havoc of his medicines and against which it was in vain to fight. This battle with the mice became with him a harmless mania. He complained and excused himself more than was warranted by the actual damage he suffered. He locked things away from them and hung his medicines from the ceiling, he resorted to all sorts of devices and refinements against his invisible enemies. He dreamed of a great metal box in which he might be able to keep all his more perishable things under key and completely mouse-proof, but he never had the courage to mention it in front of the Brothers or the Guardian the idea of such a costly purchase. He was

For example, there was one of these old "uncles" who was fonder of brandy than higher authority allowed or than was good and profitable either for his bodily health or for the advancement of his soul. The old man developed liver trouble but did not stop drinking. Fra Luka, who had among his notes a prescription headed "to sicken a man of drink" treated the old friar to a good deal of trouble but without success. Every day the same conversation was repeated between them:

"Let me be, Fra Luka, and go and see those who want to be cured and for whom there is a cure," the old friar would grumble.

"Come, come, my poor fellow, pull yourself together! There's help for every man. For every man the earth liides a cure."

And Fra Luka would sit beside the old, sick and surly "uncle", who even when he was in better health had never cared a jot for books or learning, and he would bring him books and demonstrate to him at length how great were the riches of the earth and how great her mercy toward men.

"Do you know that Pliny called the earth 'kindly, gentle, patient and ever a handmaid for the service of mortals', and that he wrote: 'She sheddeth healing herbs and ever bringeth them forth for man'? You see, that's what Pliny says! But *you* say: 'There's no cure for me'. Well, we've got to find one."

The old man only mumbled some abuse and put by with his hand the physic and Pliny alike; still Fra Luka would not let himself be confounded or stayed. And when he could not cure him with his medicines or calm him with quotations, he would secretly and under the disguise of medicine bring him a little of the brandy from which the Guardian had completely cut him off: and in this way he at least eased his pain a little.

But Fra Luka did not only care for the Brothers who were in the monastery. For those who were scattered about the parishes he wrote out discoloured slips of paper in his fine hand and sewed them up into thin brochures. These booklets, known as prescription books, were copied further and spread throughout the villages and parishes. In them were set down in alphabetical order various popular prescriptions, interspersed with hints on hygiene, country superstitions and useful household advice — for example, how to clean a habit stained with candle droppings

This always rouses Fra Luka uncommonly.

"Think what you're saying, you miserable wretch. Boiling water indeed! Are you a Christian?" says the "doctor", shaking him off.

Then half an hour later, after other quips and conversations, he says to the younger man: "Hm, boiling water? Think of that! One of God's creatures into boiling water!"

It was thus that Fra Luka dealt with his adversaries, great and small, and thus that he treated, fed and protected them. In this way he passed a long and happy life.

The fourth doctor who was to be found at the Consulate during the illness of Daville's son was Giovanni Mario Cologne, the accredited physician of the Austrian Consulate-General.

It is now clear that we were wrong when we stated that of Travnik's four doctors least could be said about Mordo Atijas. In reality, just as little can be said about Cologne as about Mordo; but this is because Mordo never talked at all, whereas Cologne talked too much and incessantly varied what he said.

He was a man of uncertain age, of uncertain origin, nationality and race, of uncertain beliefs and views and of equally uncertain knowledge and skill. About the whole man there was, in general, not very much left which lent itself to clear definition.

According to his own account he was by birth from the island of Cephalonia, where his father had been a doctor of note. His father had been a Venetian born in Epirus and his mother of Dalmatian stock. He had spent his childhood with his grandfather in Greece and his youth in Italy, where he had studied medicine. His adult life he had passed in the Levant, in Turkish and Austrian service.

He was tall but unusually thin. He walked with all his joints bent and flexed, as if he were so sprung that he could in an instant either contract and fold up, or else expand and lengthen out: and this was what he did continually, when talking, to a greater or lesser extent. On top of this long body came a normal head, never still, almost entirely bald, and with a few long tufts of towy, lustreless hair. His face was clean shaven, his eyes large, brown and always unnaturally bright under strikingly thick grey eyebrows. His large mouth had in it a few large yellow teeth which wagged as he spoke. Not his whole expression

inconsolable when the mice actually ate all his hare's grease, which had been so carefully prepared and rinsed many times in water.

He always kept two mouse-traps in his cell, one large and one small. He carefully set them every evening and hung in them a scrap of ham or a fragment of tallow from a candle. And usually next day at dawn, when he got up to go to the church for prayers, he would find both traps still set, but empty, and the ham and the tallow eaten. When he did manage to catch a mouse, the noise of the trap snapping woke him up and he would get up, walk round the terrified mouse and wag his finger threateningly at it.

"Aha! What will you do now, you little wretch? You're up to mischief, are you? Well, now then!"

Then, barefoot as he was and with only his habit about him, he would carefully take the trap and carrying it into the long gallery as far as the stairs, he would open the trap-door and call in a whisper:

"Come out, you rascal! Come along out!"

The panic-stricken mouse would dart down the few stairs, then straight across the pathway, and disappeared in a pile of wood which stood there at all seasons of the year.

The Brothers knew of this way Fra Luka had of catching mice, and often teased him, saying that the "doctor" had spent years in chasing and releasing the same mouse. Fra Luka firmly denied this and showed at length that he had caught dozens of them at different times in the year, large, small and middling.

"Well," said one of the elders to him, "I've heard that when you let a mouse go, you open the lid and say: 'Hey you, come out and run to the Guardian's room. Be off!'"

"There's a slander for you! What a thing to make up!" Fra Luka would say laughingly in self-defence.

"I'm not making it up, Doctor Effendi; you've been overheard by those who wander about the gallery at night just as you do."

"Off with you, slanderer, get away with you!"

But at once others are at him.

"If I were you, brother, when I caught him, I'd plunge him, trap and all, into boiling water and see if he'd want to come again after that," says a younger friar pointedly.

which easily united themselves with their environment and harboured a perpetual longing to link and identify themselves with whatever lay about them.

This sceptic and philosopher had fits of religious fervour and periods of active piety. He would then withdraw to the monastery at Guča Gora and inflict himself upon the Brothers, seeking to carry out their spiritual exercises with them and finding them insufficient in their zeal, their theological knowledge or the ardour of their devotion. The friars of Guča Gora, who were genuinely devout but simple, sturdy men, had, like all Bosnian friars, a natural loathing of exaggerated devotion and ecstatic piety and of all those who hang on to God's skirts or cringe before the altar. The old "uncles" used to bridle and grumble and one of them has even left on record how dubious and impossible they found this outlandish doctor "who calls himself a great follower of the Catholic faith, hearing Mass every morning and performing a great variety of devotions". Nevertheless, in view of his connexions with the Austrian Consulate and the respect they had for von Mitterer, the Brothers felt unable to shake off his Illyrian doctor entirely.

But Cologne went off in exactly the same way to the Orthodox monk Pakhomi and frequented the Orthodox church at Travnik, to see their religious customs, to hear the service and the chanting and to compare them with the Greek rite. With the Moslem divine of Travnik, too, Abdelam Effendi, Cologne conducted learned discussions on the history of Mohammedan beliefs, since he knew well not only the Koran but all the theological and philosophic precepts from Abu Hanif to Al Gazali. On each occasion he deluged the rest of the reverend gentlemen among the *ulema* of Travnik, unwearingly and mercilessly, with quotations from Islamic theologians of whom in most cases they had never heard.

The same continuous streak of instability prevailed in the man's character. He proclaimed himself to the world, at first sight, inconstant, pliable, and abject even to the point of disgust. His thought normally adapted itself to the thought of the person with whom he was speaking, not only in the sense that he made the other's point of view his own but even to the point of exceeding the other in sharpness of expression. But in exactly

merely, but the whole look of this man changed without ceasing, changed completely and incredibly. In the course of a single conversation he could alter his appearance fundamentally several times. From under the mask of a feeble old man there broke through — was it yet another mask? — the form of a pimply restless, overgrown youth who has grown out of his clothes, and has no idea what to do with his hands and feet or which way to look. His expressive face was always in movement and reflected the feverishly rapid play of his brain. Humility, reflectiveness, indignation, sincere enthusiasm, naive delight, pure, unclouded joy, succeeded each other with astonishing swiftness on his regular and mobile features. And with them all, his large mouth with its scanty, shaky teeth scattered words, a rain of words, words abundant, wounding, malicious, audacious, amiable, dulcet, fantastic words, in Italian, Turkish, modern Greek, French, Latin and "Illyrian". With the same ease with which he changed expression and gesture, Cologna passed from one language to another, mingled and interchanged words and whole sentences. As a matter of fact, Italian was the only language he knew well.

He did not even write his name always in the same way, but wrote it differently on different occasions and at different periods of his life, according to the service he was in and the kind of work he was doing, scientific, political or literary — *Giovanni Mario Cologna*, *Glan Colonia*, *Joannes Colonis Epirota*, *Bartolo cavagliere d'Epiro*, *dottore illyrico*. Still more frequent and more radical were the changes in the nature of what he did and claimed to do under these diverse names. In his fundamental convictions Cologna was a man with the ideas of his time, a *philosophe*, a free and critical spirit devoid of all prejudices. But that did not prevent his studying the religious life, not only of the different Christian churches, but also of the Islamic and other oriental sects and religions; and for him to study meant to identify himself for a certain time with the object he was studying, to become enthusiastic over it, to appropriate it, at least for the moment, as his own sole and exclusive belief, rejecting everything he had believed before and everything which up till then had moved him to enthusiasm. He had an extraordinary mind, capable of astonishing flights, but composed of elements



of human thought wherever it manifested itself and whatever the direction it took. To this craving he enslaved himself body and soul, without measure, without any clear objective and without reserve of any kind. All the religious and philosophical movements and struggles in the history of humanity, without exception, occupied his mind and lived, moved, clashed and crossed in him, like waves on the surface of the sea. Every one of them was equally near to him and remote from him and with each of them he was able to accord and identify himself completely for a certain time, while he was taken up with it. These inner, mental motions were his real world and in them he enjoyed genuine inspirations and deep experiences; but at the same time they divided and estranged him from other people and from society and brought him into conflict with the rational and healthy ways of the rest of the world. What was best in him remained invisible and unapproachable and what could be seen and sensed was repellent to all. Even in other, less harsh and exacting surroundings, a man like this could not have won a proper place or real respect for himself. Here, in this town and among these people, he was almost bound to be unhappy and to seem crazy, ridiculous, dubious and idle.

The Brothers considered him a madman and a featherpate, the townsfolk a spy and a learned idiot. Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak said *à propos* of this doctor:

"The biggest fool is not the man who cannot read but the man who thinks that everything he reads is true."

Desfossés was the only man in Travnik who did not run away from Cologne and had the desire and the patience to talk with him sometimes, open-heartedly and at length. But for this very reason, without fairness or necessity, they accused him at the Austrian Consulate of being in French pay.

It was hard to tell in what Cologne's medical vocation and interest lay, but certainly they were among his least regarded studies. In the light of the philosophical truths and religious inspirations which mixed and alternated in him continually, the needs and sicknesses of men, even life itself, represented nothing of any particular significance or profound point. For him diseases and changes in the human body were merely one more occasion for the exercise of his mind, a mind condemned to

the same way it happened at times, quite unexpectedly and suddenly, that he would adopt some audacious standpoint against all comers and defend it stoutly and stubbornly, committing himself to it utterly, without regard to the harm or danger to himself.

From his youth up Cologne had been in the Austrian service. It was perhaps the only thing in which he had shown some continuity and persistence. He had spent a certain time as private physician to the Pashas of Scutari and Janina but even then he had not severed his ties with the Austrian Consuls. He was now posted to the Consulate at Travnik, far more on account of his old connections and deserts, his knowledge of the language and acquaintance with conditions than as a doctor. He was not in fact numbered among the Consulate staff but lived apart and was only notified to the authorities as a doctor under the protection of the Austrian Consulate.

Von Mitterer, who had no feeling for the fantastic and no comprehension of philosophy and who knew both the language and the conditions of the country better than Cologne, had no idea what to make of this unsought colleague. Frau von Mitterer felt a physical disgust for this Levantine and declared excitedly that she would sooner die than be treated at the hands of this man. In conversation she called him "Chronos"—since to her he resembled the symbolic figure of Time, only a Chronos who had no beard and with no mortal scythe nor hourglass in his hands.

Such was the manner of life at Travnik of this doctor without patients. He lived away from the Consulate in a tumble-down house adjoining an overgrown quarry. He had no family. A single servant, an Albanian, ran his whole household, which was needy and queer in every respect, in its furnishing, its food, its division of its time. He passed his time in vain attempts to find someone to converse with who would not grow bored and escape, or over his book and his notes, which embraced the whole of human knowledge from astronomy and chemistry to diplomacy and the art of war.

This man without roots and balance, who had nevertheless a pure heart and a mind eager for knowledge, had one morbid but great and disinterested craving—to penetrate into the mystery

very clumsiness in the handling of spoons and knives and the caution with which they approached each dish were not in the least ridiculous or coarse but rather dignified and touching.

The conversation grew livelier and louder and was carried on in a variety of languages. At the end, the friars resolutely refused sweets and dessert. Anna Maria was at a loss. But the affair was quickly smoothed over when the turn of coffee and tobacco came, both of which the friars received with unconcealed satisfaction as a reward for all they had had to go through up till then.

The men withdrew to smoke. It so happened that neither Daville nor Desfossés were smokers; but von Mitterer and Fra Julian emitted dense clouds, while Fra Ivo took snuff and wiped his whiskers and his red chin with a large blue handkerchief. This was the first time that von Mitterer had invited his friends and his adversaries together and that the Consuls had met in the presence of the Brothers. It seemed that Christmas had brought with it a time of solemn truce and as if the death of Daville's child had softened or at least suspended the hostility and antagonism between the two men. Von Mitterer was glad to have made it possible for such generous sentiments to find expression.

Still, this same occasion was a fitting opportunity for each of those present, by his conduct, to display both his policy and his personality in the most favourable light. Von Mitterer in a modest and gentlemanly manner managed to convey to Daville the extent of his influence with the Brothers and their flock, and the Brothers confirmed this by their speech and their behaviour. Daville, as in duty bound and out of personal pique, took the line of Napoleon's representative and adopted that "imperial" attitude which accorded so ill with his true nature, falsified his whole appearance and gave an unfavourable twist to his whole personality. The only one who spoke and behaved in a natural and unforced fashion was Desfossés, but as he was the youngest, he said least.

The Brothers, in so far as they said anything at all, complained about the Turks, about fines and disputed rights of way, about the course of history and their own fate and, more or less, about the world in general, all with that wonderful and typical relish with which every Bosnian likes to talk of hard and hopeless cases.

was warmed and lighted. Pale with excitement, Anna Maria distributed presents all round, wrapped up in tissue paper, tied with gold thread and adorned with sprigs of juniper.

Next day there was a lunch to which Daville and his wife and Desfossés were invited. In addition, there were the parish priest of Dolac, Fra Ivo Janković, and the young vicar of the Guča Gora monastery, Fra Julian Pašalić, deputizing for his Guardian, who was ill. He was the same huge and testy friar whom Desfossés had met at the inn at Kupres, when he entered Bosnia. He had seen him again later, on the occasion of his first visit to Guča Gora, and had had a chance to continue the argument begun in such unusual circumstances.

It was hot in the big dining-room and there was a smell of cakes and pine-wood. Outside it glittered brightly with a fine snow as white as powder. The reflection of this brightness fell on the richly laden table and was splintered in silver and glass. The two Consuls were in their official uniforms, Anna Maria and her daughter in light and fashionable dresses of embroidered muslin, with high waists and puffed sleeves. Only Madame Daville struck a different note in the black she wore, which made her look even thinner. The two friars, both tall, heavy men, in their best habits, completely covered the chairs they sat on and looked like two brown haystacks in the gay assembly round them.

The lunch was plentiful and good. Polish brandy, Hungarian wines and Viennese sweets were served. All the food was highly seasoned and spiced. Frau von Mitterer's fanciful notions were to be felt in everything, down to the last detail.

The friars ate abundantly and in silence, daunted occasionally by the unfamiliar food and by the fine spoons of Viennese silver, which vanished like children's toys in their huge hands. Anna Maria turned often to them, encouraging and urging, fluttering her hands, with tossing hair and flashing eyes, and they wiped their heavy peasant whiskers and looked at this fair, vivacious woman with the same tranquil surprise as they did at these unaccustomed dishes. Desfossés did not fail to note the natural dignity of these two utterly simple men, their attentiveness, their reserve and the quiet decision with which they declined to eat and drink what they were unused to and did not like. Their

consequences of any transgression of these rules. A man needs three doctors, Cologne used to say: *mens hilaris, requies moderata, diaeta* (a cheerful mind, moderate rest, diet).

It was on the basis of such ideas as these that Cologne treated his patients: they were none the better and none the worse for that, and either they died when they had departed too widely from the line of life and had reached the line of death, or else they got well, that is to say, threw off their pains and derangements and returned within the limits of the saving rules of Salerno. Cologne made this easier for them by providing a few of those thousands of Latin adages which are so easy to remember and so difficult to observe.

Such, briefly, was the "Illyrian doctor", the last of the four doctors who in the Travnik valley, each after his fashion, waged a hard and hopeless struggle against disease and death.

### 13

Christmas, the festival of all Christians, came to Travnik too, with a train of worries, memories, solemn and sorrowful thoughts. This year it was the cause of renewed contact between the Consuls and their families.

Things were particularly lively at the Austrian Consulate. Frau von Mitterer happened at the time to be in one of her phases of kindness, piety and devotion to the family. She ran about, purveying presents and surprises for all. She locked herself into the room and decorated a Christmas tree and practised old Christmas carols on the harp. She even gave some thought to a midnight Mass at the church at Dolac, recalling Christmas Eves in the churches of Vienna, but Fra Ivo, to whom she had sent an official of the Consulate in connection with this matter, replied so sharply and rudely that the official was unable to repeat his reply to the Frau Konsul. He did, however, manage to convince her that in these countries such things were not so much as to be thought of. The Consul's wife was disappointed but went on with her preparations at home.

Christmas Eve went off magnificently. The whole of the small Austrian colony was gathered round the tree. The house

eternal restlessness. Being himself very loosely attached to life, he could not even conceive the importance to a normal man of the ties of blood, of bodily health and the longer or shorter duration of his individual life. The fact was that in medical problems too, everything for Cologna began and ended in words, a spate of words, exciting conversations, disputations, and often in sudden and complete changes of opinion about a given disease, its causes and its treatment. It is obvious that no one would call in or seek out a doctor of this kind unless he were in dire need. It might have been said that the main medical work of this eloquent doctor lay in his continual disputes and passionate enmity with Cesare Davna.

Having studied in Milan, Cologna was a supporter of Italian medicine, while Davna despised and depreciated Italian doctors and proved that the University of Montpellier had centuries ago beaten and surpassed the school of Salerno, which was antique and out-of-date. In reality, Cologna derived his learning and his many aphorisms from that great compilation *Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum* which he religiously kept hidden away in a safe place and from which he extracted and freely doled out rhymed precepts on the dieting of body and soul. Davna, on the other hand, lived on a number of pamphlets and lecture notes by celebrated professors of Montpellier and on the great and ancient manual *Lilium medicinae*. But the real basis of their dispute was not so much a matter of books or knowledge, which neither of them possessed, but their Levantine need to wrangle and compete, the intransigence common to doctors, the truculence peculiar to Travnik and their own personal vanity and intolerance.

Cologna's view of human sickness and health, if it were possible in his case to speak of a single consistent view, was as simple as it was futile and hopeless. Faithful to his teachers, Cologna considered that life is "a state of activity which tends continually towards death and will by slow degrees arrive there: and death is the final resolution of the long illness known as life." But these invalids called human beings may live long and with proportionately fewer distresses and pains, on condition that they follow experienced medical advice and the medical rules of measure and moderation in all things. Pains and derangements, and premature death as well, are merely the natural

and had become permanent traits in their character. Originally bred by want and under oppression, these qualities were today, and would be in the future, a great obstacle in the way of progress, the evil inheritance of a grievous past and a gross defect which would have to be rooted out.

Desfossés did not conceal that he was surprised at the obstinate defence which not only the Moslems but also people of all the other faiths in Bosnia put up against any influence, even the most beneficent, and their opposition to any innovation, any progress, even such progress as was possible in existing conditions and depended entirely on them themselves. He pointed out all the harmfulness of this Chinese rigidity, this walling-off from life.

"How is it possible," Desfossés, asked, "for this country to become peaceful and orderly and acquire at least that degree of civilization possessed by its neighbours, when its people are segregated inside it, as happens nowhere else in Europe? There are four religions living in this cramped, hilly, starveling patch of ground. Each of them is exclusive and keeps strictly apart from the others. You all live under one sky and by the same earth, yet each of these four groups has the centre of its spiritual life far off in foreign parts, in Rome, Moscow, Constantinople, Mecca, Jerusalem or God knows where — in any case, not where these people are born and die. And each of them considers that its own welfare and advantage are dependent on the ruin and decline of the other three religions and that the other three can only advance at its own expense. And each of them has made intolerance the highest virtue, and looks for salvation from somewhere outside, each from a different quarter."

The friar listened to him with the smile of a man who fancies he knows a thing or two and does not need to confirm or divulge his knowledge. He was obviously determined to contradict Desfossés at all costs, and went on to show that, considering their circumstances, his countrymen could only live and exist as they did, unless they wished to renounce their patrimony, degenerate and die out.

Desfossés replied that the fact that a people began to acquire a healthier and more rational way of life, did not necessarily mean its renouncing its religion and its national sanctuaries. In his

In a group of this kind, in which everyone was carefully saying only what he wanted known and propagated further afield and was endeavouring to listen only to what he desired to learn and the rest were desiring to conceal, no real conversation, of course, could develop or take on a natural and cordial tone.

Like a good and tactful host, von Mitterer did not allow the talk to pass to subjects which might cause dissension. Only Fra Julian and Desfossés managed to draw apart and to hold a little livelier conversation together as old acquaintances. The Bosnian friar and the young Frenchman had felt sympathy and respect for each other ever since their first meeting at Kupres. Subsequent meetings at Guča Gora had only brought them closer together. Both were young, cheerful, healthy men and they entered on a conversation with enjoyment, as on a friendly bout of sparring, without any *arrière pensées* or any personal vanity.

Drawing a little apart and gazing through the steamy window at the bare trees sprinkled with fine snow, they talked of Bosnia and the Bosnians. Desfossés asked for facts and explanatory details of the Catholic population and the work of the friars. He then related, frankly and calmly, his own impressions and experiences up to that time. The friar saw at once that the "young Consul" had not wasted his time in Travnik but had collected a great many facts about the country and the people as well as about the Catholics and the work of the Brothers. They agreed that life in Bosnia was uncommonly hard and that the people of all denominations were poor, and backward in every respect. Seeking for causes and explanations of this state of affairs, the friar attributed it all to Turkish domination and asserted that there could be no improvement until the territories were freed from Turkish rule and Turkish was replaced by Christian government. Desfossés was unable to accept this interpretation but looked for the root of the matter in the Christians themselves. Turkish rule, he declared, had produced certain characteristic qualities in its Christian subjects, such as secretiveness, obstinacy, mistrust, slow-wittedness and fear of all innovation, all work and all movement. These qualities, maintained through centuries of unequal struggle and continual self-defence, had passed into the natures of people in these parts



woman there were unbreakable, enduring ties which nobody knew of and nobody could perceive. His ears were continually filled with her high-pitched, uneven voice. Even the rather harsh accent with which she spoke French seemed to him not a defect but a queer attraction special to her. With a voice like that, it struck him then, one could speak any language in the world and to every man it would seem as near and clear as his own mother tongue.

Before the party broke up, the talk had turned on music and Anna Maria had showed Desfossés her *Musikzimmer*, a small, light room with very little furniture, a few silhouettes on the walls and a great gilt harp in the middle of the floor. Anna Maria had expressed regret at having been obliged to leave her clavichord in Vienna and at having only been able to bring her harp which was a great comfort to her in this wilderness. Thereupon she had stretched out an arm bared to the elbow and had passed her hand at random over the strings. In those casually sprinkled notes the young man seemed to hear the music of the spheres breaking the leaden silence of Travník and promising days of delight and happiness in the midst of this desolation. He had stood on the other side of the harp and had told her quietly how he would love to be able to hear her playing and singing. With a mute glance she had indicated Madame Daville's mourning and made a promise for later on.

"You must promise to come and ride when the weather gets a little better. Do you mind the cold?"

"Why should I mind?" the woman had replied slowly from the other side of the harp, and her voice coming through the strings seemed to the young man a music full of promise. He looked into her deep brown eyes, with a light somewhere in their depths, and here too it seemed, there were promises beyond understanding.

Von Mitterer, meanwhile, in the other room, had succeeded in telling Daville, quite naturally and, as it were, casually and in the deepest confidence, that relations between Austria and Turkey were becoming worse and worse and that they were being forced at Vienna to take military precautions not only on the frontier but also in the interior itself, since they could not rule out the possibility that the Turks might attack them the following summer.

view it was precisely to this end that the Brothers could and should direct their work.

"Ah, my dear sir," said Fra Julian with that waggishness peculiar to those who are defending a conservative point of view, "Ah, it's easy for you to talk about the need for material progress and healthy influences, and about Chinese rigidity, but if we had been less rigid and had opened our gates to all sorts of 'healthy influences', perhaps my good parishioners Pero and Anto would today have been calling themselves by Turkish names."

"Oh, come, come, there's no need to exaggerate or to be high-handed about it."

"What do you expect? We Bosnians are a pig-headed race. Everybody knows that and we're famous for it," said Fra Julian with the same complacency.

"Oh but excuse me, what do you care how you look in other people's eyes and what people think or know about you? As if that matters! What matters is how much one gets out of life and what he makes of himself in life, and what he makes of his environment and his posterity."

"We maintain our standpoint and no one can boast that he has ever driven us to change it."

"But, Father Julian, it isn't the standpoint that matters, it's life. A standpoint is meant to serve life; and where is your life here?"

Fra Julian was just opening his mouth to utter, as usual, some quotation, when their host broke into their conversation. Fra Ivo had risen. Red with good eating, he presented his thick, heavy hand episcopally to each in turn like a miniature cushion, and breathing heavily and perspiring, he announced that it was winter, there was a snowstorm, it was a long way to Dolac and they had better start if they wanted to get there by daylight.

The young man and the friar parted with regret.

Even at lunch Desfossés had looked from time to time at the restless white hands of Frau von Mitterer and whenever he noticed how that same pearly lustre showed in her skin at the selfsame points, whenever she made a gesture, he had shut his eyes for a moment with the feeling that between him and that

the window to look for the light in the Austrian Consulate on the other side of the river. The night was dense and impenetrable and nothing could be seen or heard outside; but the young man himself was filled with sound and light. In the darkness and the silence, when he stood still and shut his eyes, Anna Maria appeared before him, like light and music themselves. Her words spread a brightness and that gleam in the depths of her eyes uttered the calm and somehow significant words she herself had used that day: "Why should I mind?"

The whole world, for the young man, was overshadowed by a gigantic harp and he fell asleep lulled by the strong intoxication of his own dancing, quivering senses.

14

**B**right and sunny days, when it was possible to ride in spite of the cold, arrived as inevitably as all natural phenomena. As inevitably, the riders from the two Consulates met in accordance with their Christmas agreement, on the frozen road which leads through Kupilo. This road seemed to have been created for walking and riding. Even, straight and sloping, rather more than a mile long, cut into the steep hillsides below Karauldjik and Kajabaša, it follows the course of the Lašva, but high above the river and the town which lies in the valley below it. At its further end the road becomes rather wider and rougher and here it splits into rutted country ways which lead further up the hill to the villages of Jankovići and Orašje.

The sun makes a late appearance at Travnik. Desfossés with the kavass rode along the sunlit road but the town below him was still in shade, under a shroud of mist and smoke. Vapour streamed from the mouths of the horsemen and from the nostrils of their mounts and rose like a haze from the steaming horses. The frozen ground gave back a muffled sound under their hoofs. The sun was still wrapped in clouds but the valley was slowly filling with rosy light. Desfossés rode at an uneven pace, now at a slow walk, so that it seemed that at any moment he might stop and dismount, now at a brisk trot, so that the kavass on his heavy dun horse was left a gunshot behind him.

Daville, who knew of the Austrian preparations and like everybody else, believed that they were directed not against Turkey but against France and that Turkey was serving only as a pretext, found in this communication of von Mitterer's fresh confirmation of his view. He pretended to believe the Colonel's words, while calculating when he would have a messenger available, through whom he could present this deliberate indiscretion as one proof more of the unfriendly intentions of the Viennese Government.

As they parted, Anna Maria and Desfossés declared publicly that they would not let the winter prevent their riding and that they would go out on horseback as soon as the first dry, fine weather came.

On the evening of that first day of Christmas they did not sit long after supper in the French Consulate. By unspoken agreement each wanted to withdraw to his own room as soon as he could.

Madame Daville was subdued and scarcely restrained her tears even during supper. This had been her first venture into society since the death of her child and now she was suffering from the effect of this first contact which had shaken her thoroughly and had revived once again her grief at her loss and the pain which with quiet had begun to abate. In her heaviest moments she had promised herself that she would master her tears and overcome her grief and that she would offer her child as a sacrifice to God, with her own anguish at being bereft of him. But now her tears flowed unrestrainedly and her sorrow was as keen as on the first day, before she had made this pledge. The poor woman wept and at the same time prayed God to forgive her for not being able to keep her vow, made at a moment when she had overrated her strength. She gave free course to her tears and was bowed down with a pain which rent her body worse than the pangs of birth.

In his study Daville was writing a report on his conversation with the Austrian Consul, happy in the thought that his forecasts, "in this humble sector of world politics, from this bleak observation post", had proved correct.

Desfossés had not even lighted his candles but was pacing his bedroom with great strides, pausing every now and then at

devoted the major share of their attention to their horses and their riding, that their encounters were accidental and their conversations harmless, on such subjects as the ride, the weather and the paces of their mounts. No one could have known what was being expressed by that curl of white vapour which like a restless streamer fluttered now from her lips, now from his, then broke off and dissolved, to unfurl itself once more on the cold air, livelier and longer than before.

When the sun penetrated to the deepest bottom of the valley and the whole air of the valley grew rosy for a moment, when the half-frozen Lašva began to steam as if invisible fires were burning all through the town, the young man and the woman took a long and cordial leave of each other (lovers betray themselves most easily at partings) and descended into the town among the snow and the hoarfrost, each at their end of the road.

The first to notice that there was something afoot between young Desfossés and the beautiful Frau von Mitterer, ten years his senior, was Colonel von Mitterer himself. He perfectly recognized his wife to be a "sick child". He knew her fits and starts, her "vagaries", as he called them, and he foresaw with ease their evolution and their end. To the Colonel, therefore, it was not difficult to see what was happening to his wife and to forecast in advance the whole course of the affliction — hallucination, enthusiasm (with spiritual implications), disillusionment with the coarse desires of men for sensual contact, flight, *crise de nerfs*, despair — "everyone desires me and no one loves me" — and finally oblivion and the discovery of fresh objects for enthusiasm and disenchantment. It did not indeed require great penetration to grasp the intentions of this tall young gentleman who had been dumped in Travnik from Paris and had been set before the beautiful Frau von Mitterer, the only civilized woman for hundreds of miles around. What the Colonel found troublesome and disagreeable in this instance was the question of his own position and his relations with the French Consulate.

His relations with the rival consular establishment and its staff had been laid down by the Colonel for himself, his family and his colleagues; from time to time they were revised, altered and adapted as the shifting times required, in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry and with the general situation.

In this way the young man cheated time while awaiting the moment when he would catch sight of Anna Maria with her escort somewhere on the road. For those who are buoyed up by youth and driven by desire, even the tedium of waiting and the bitterness of uncertainty are no more than constituent parts of the great rapture which love promises every man. The young man waited with trepidation but also with the certainty that in the end all his fears — Is she ill? Have they stopped her? Has something happened to her on the way? — would be proved groundless, for in love affairs like this everything is good and pleasant except their ending.

And in fact, every morning, when the sun had surmounted the sharp mountain rim and when these doubts and questionings began to grow more frequent and to seem increasingly strange, with the "inevitability of a natural phenomenon" Anna Maria would appear in a black habit, with a long skirt cut *à l'amazone*, moulded perfectly to her side-saddle and her tall black horse. Then both would rein in their horses and approach each other as naturally as the sun waxed above them and the daylight grew stronger in the valley. The young man fancied that at a distance of a hundred paces he could see plainly how her hat *à la Valois* blended, as no other woman's did, in one indistinguishable whole with her brown hair and how her face, pale with the morning freshness, blended with her still half-awakened eyes. ("Your eyes are only half awake," he said to her each time as they met, giving the words "half awake" an audacious private meaning, and she would lower her eyes, showing her glistening eyelids with their bluish shadow).

For a while after their first greetings and words they would remain where they were; then they would separate and after a brief ride meet again as if by chance and ride a part of the way side by side talking rapidly and hungrily, to separate once again, and once again to cross each other's path and renew their conversation. These manoeuvrings were due to their station in society and to considerations of convention, but inwardly they were never apart even for a second and the moment they met again they went on with their conversation of a moment ago with the same delight. To their escorts and to anyone who looked at them detachedly, it was made to look as if they both

had not failed to notice the protracted outings and encounters with Frau von Mitterer. As he had a firmly established line of his own to be followed by himself and the whole of his staff with regard to the Austrian Consulate, these meetings were unwelcome to him too. (As often happened in other matters as well, Daville's wishes on this point were identical with those of his opponent, Von Mitterer). But he too did not exactly know how to stop them. In his dealings with women Daville had from his youth up shown strict discipline of mind and body. This discipline was as much the effect of a strict and healthy education as of a natural frigidity and weak impulses. Like all such men, Daville had a feeling of superstitious fear in the face of all irregular or disorderly affairs of this kind. Even as a young man in Paris and in the Army, though robust and tough, he had always maintained a kind of guilty silence in the free talk of other young men about women. And now he would have found it easier to express his disapproval and to caution the young man on any other count than that of a question involving a woman.

Apart from this, Daville was afraid of his young colleague — "afraid" is the right word. He was afraid of his restless, alien intelligence, of his varied and disorderly, but enormous stores of knowledge, of his carefree and frivolous attitude, of his inquisitiveness of mind, of his physical strength and, more especially, of his ability to fear no man. So Daville waited, looking for some suitable, circumspect method of warning the young man.

In this way the month of January passed, and in February there came once more days of wet and mist with deep mud and slippery roads, which stopped what neither Daville nor von Mitterer had ventured or contrived to stop. Riding became impossible. Desfossés, it was true, went out even in such weather as this, on foot in his top boots and in a brown cloak with a collar of otter fur, faint and cold to the point of exhaustion. But Anna Maria could not leave the house in such weather, not even according to her reasoning or her inclinations; but like an angel banished from Heaven, airy and melancholy and smiling, she gazed at the world with her bright, "unawakened" eyes and wandered absently among her household as among lifeless shadows or harmless ghosts. She spent most of the day

This was a serious and difficult matter for him, since his feeling for precision, as a soldier, and for the conscientious discharge of duty, as an official, were more highly developed in him than any other sentiment. And now, by her goings on, Anna Maria might upset and spoil this relationship to the detriment of the service and of the Colonel's reputation in it. This had never been the case with any of her earlier "vagaries"; it was therefore a new and hitherto unknown form of distress which was now inflicted on the Colonel by his wife.

Although he represented a small cog in the machinery of the great Austrian Empire, the Colonel knew, in virtue of his position as Consul-General at Travnik, that his Government was completing its preparations for war, counting on a new coalition against Napoleon. He knew, too, that these preparations, in so far as they could not be concealed, had the appearance of being directed against Turkey. The Colonel had express instructions to calm the Turkish authorities and indeed to convince them that these preparations could not in any circumstances be intended for a war with Turkey. At the same time he was receiving with ever growing frequency still stricter orders to keep a watch on the French Consul and his agents and to report every smallest particular. From all this it was not hard for the Colonel to deduce that he might with fair probability expect in the near future a rupture of relations with France, new alliances and war.

In these circumstances it will be understood that the Colonel found some inconvenience in his wife's love affair and in these lovers' rides in midwinter, before the eyes of the world and the servants. But he knew that it was useless to talk to Anna Maria, since rational arguments produced on her the completely opposite effect. He saw that there was nothing else for it but to await the moment when the young man would reach out to Anna Maria as a woman, when, as on all previous occasions, she would retreat in disgust and despair, and when the whole business would thus break up automatically and for ever. The Colonel fervently hoped that this moment would come as soon as possible.

Daville too, on his side, who was always somewhat gingerly in dealing with his "gifted but not very well balanced" colleague,



her herself but were felt to be serious and fateful. For years now she had been dimly aware of the relations within the family, had silently noted her father, her mother, the servants, the family friends and had had an impression of matters that she found inconceivably difficult, hateful and sad. She grew more and more embarrassed and withdrew more and more into herself, but within herself, again, she found new causes for embarrassment and withdrawal. At Semlin she had still had a few friends, officers' daughters, so that the life was filled and occupied with her school, with burning adoration of her teachers, the nuns, and with hundreds of trivial worries and joys. But now she was utterly alone, abandoned to herself and to the disquiets of her age, between her good but helpless father and her crazy, incomprehensible mother.

Hearing her mother's singing, the girl hid her face in the pages of the *Musen Almanach*, quivering with irrational shame and an astonishing fear. She made as if to read, but in reality with closed eyes she listened to the song which she had known well from her childhood's years. She hated it and feared it as something which only grown-ups knew about and did but which was terrible and unendurable and turned to unrealities even the loveliest of books and the best of thoughts.

The beginning of March was exceptionally warm and dry, more like the end of April, and proved unexpectedly favourable for riders from the two Consulates. Once again the meetings and waitings began on the level upper road, with gay gallops over the soft earth and the yellow, battered grass, through the mild, fresh air of an early spring. Once again both Consuls, each on his own, began to worry and ponder how to stop this equestrian idyll, though without any sharp disputes or major scenes.

According to the information which reached both Consuls, a quarrel was inevitable between the Government at Vienna and Napoleon. "Relations between the two countries are developing in a direction quite contrary to the cordial relations which, as all the world can see, are being established on the riding track above Travnik", as Daville told his wife, allowing himself one of those family witticisms to which husbands treat their wives at the cost of very little intellectual expense or labour. At the same

at her harp, mercilessly running through her rich repertoire of German and Italian songs or losing herself in endless variations and fantasias. Her powerful and warm but unsteady voice, in which there could be felt a threat of tears and sobs soon to come, filled the little room and penetrated to the other parts of the house. In his study the Colonel heard Anna Maria singing, as she accompanied herself on the harp.

Tutta raccolta ancor	My soul is still atremble,
Nel palpitante cor	all gathered into my
Tremante ho l'anima.	fluttering heart.

Hearing this language of passion and shameless feeling, he trembled with impotent hatred against that irrational world from which all his immeasurable domestic unhappiness and humiliation came. He dropped his pen and stopped his ears with his hands, but he still heard from the first floor below him, as from some mysterious depth, the penetrating sound of his wife's voice and the cascading, flowing notes of the harp. They came from a world which was the reverse of all the Colonel held to be of value, sacred and serious. This music, he felt, haunted him perpetually and would never be silent but, feeble and sentimental as it was, would outlive him and every living creature, armies and empires, order and truth, duty and respect, and would wail and flow on over their dead bodies in exactly the same way, like a thin but continual spirit of water over ruins.

The Colonel took up his pen again and continued the opening phrases of his report, writing with nervous speed and in time with the music which filtered up from below, and feeling that all this was unendurable and yet had to be endured.

At that same moment their daughter Agatha was listening to the singing. On the warm, light veranda of Frau von Mitterer's "winter garden" the girl was sitting in her low chair on the red rug. In her lap she held, unopened, the latest *Musen Almanach*. Its pages were full of wonderful new pieces in prose and verse, of a lofty inspiration, but her efforts to read them were vain. Some morbid but irresistible force compelled her to listen to her mother's voice coming from the music room.

This slender creature, with the intelligent eyes and the look of reserve, silent and mistrustful from her childhood, had a presentiment of a great many things which were unclear to

Coursing ahead in this way, each on their own, the pair met at one moment at the end of the level stretch of road, at the point where it suddenly curved round and became stony and broken. At this bend there was a small pinewood. On a sunny day the trees appeared a black, solid mass and the ground beneath them was dry and russet with fallen pine-needles. Desfossés at once dismounted and proposed to Anna Maria that she too should get down and explore this wood which, so he declared, reminded him of Italy. The word Italy was the lady's undoing. Throwing their bridle-rein over one arm and stumbling on feet numb with riding over the slippery carpet of rusty pine-needles, they advanced a few steps into the wood, which grew denser and closed in behind them. Anna Maria walked with difficulty in her riding-boots, holding up in one hand the long skirt of her black habit. She stopped, hesitant. The young man talked as if he wished to shout down the silence of the wood and reassure both himself and her. He compared the wood with a church or some such thing. But between his words there were gaps and silences, filled with ardent catches of his breath and the beating of his heart. Then the young man threw both their reins over a bough. The horses stood quietly, twitching their muscles. He drew her, stumbling, a few paces further to a hollow where boughs and a thick screen of pine concealed them. She drew back, slipping helplessly in her fright on the thick layer of needles. But before she could get free or say a word, she saw the flushed face of the young man close to her own. There was no further talk of Italy or churches. Those great red lips were near hers, and now there were no words upon them. The woman turned pale, opened her eyes wide as if she had suddenly awakened, tried to push him from her, to run away, but her knees gave beneath her. His hand was already about her waist. She cried out like someone who is being savagely slaughtered without defence: "No, not that!" Her eyes rolled upwards. She let fall the skirt of her habit which all this time she had clutched in her hand, and sank to the ground.

Gone was the familiar world, words, walks, Consuls and Consulates. Gone were the pair of them themselves, in the struggling, involved group, with the thick carpet of pine-needles crackling beneath them. Claspings the fainting woman, the young

time it served as practice for the opening of a conversation with young Desfossés on this disagreeable topic. It really could not go on much longer.

Meanwhile, the demon called "need for a champion", who drove Anna Maria on her quest for young and gifted "strong men" and who repelled her from them with equal force as soon as her "champion", being a man of flesh and blood, exhibited human desires and inclinations, this demon took a hand on the present occasion and made things easier both for Daville and for von Mitterer, if it is possible, generally speaking, to talk of anything being made easy for von Mitterer. There came in due course what was bound to come — the moment when Anna Maria, disillusioned, appalled and struck to the heart, dropped everything and ran to the seclusion of her room, filled with disgust at herself and the whole world and pursued by thoughts of suicide and by a need to torment her husband or someone else.

The unusual warmth of the last days of March hastened the course of events and brought on the crisis. One sunny morning the horses drummed once more along the level road between the bare bushes. Anna Maria and Desfossés were both intoxicated with the freshness and the beauty of the day. Both let their horses go at a gallop, to meet again further along the road, where, excited and out of breath, they exchanged glowing words and broken sentences, which for their ears alone held a double meaning and intention and set still more stirring in motion the blood already roused by the ride and by the sweetness of the morning. In the middle of the conversation Anna Maria whipped up her horse and flew off to the very end of the road, leaving the excited young man half way through a word. Then she came back at a walk and the conversation continued. This game soon palled. The horses moved apart, like well-trained mounts, then came together, then separated again, like two billiard balls which draw steadily closer to each other and suddenly cannon. In the course of this game their escorts got left behind. The servants and kavasses of both of them rode slowly on their ponies taking no part in their masters' diversion but also not mingling with each other. Both were waiting until their superiors were tired and having had enough, were ready to go home.

Everything seemed to have altered and shifted. Everything about him and within him, down to the dimensions of his own body.

And so these winter riders, these once passionate lovers from the hill road, parted for ever.

Von Mitterer saw at once that the relations between his wife and her undeclared champion had arrived, as so often before, at the critical parting of the ways and that the season of domestic storms had begun. And sure enough, after two days of complete retirement without food or company, the scenes began with their baseless reproaches and imprecations ("Joseph, for the love of God!.."), which the Colonel had foreseen, with a calm but painful determination to endure them to the end as he had done so often before.

Daville too quickly noticed that Desfossés no longer went out riding with Frau von Mitterer. This was welcome, since it freed him from the painful duty of speaking to the young man on the subject and telling him that he must break off all intimate contact with the Austrian Consulate, since all reports were now indicating clearly that relations between Napoleon and the Court of Vienna were once again becoming strained. Daville read these reports with alarm, as he listened to the spring gales of a March swirling round the house.

Meanwhile, sitting in his warm room, the "young Consul" was swallowing his anger with Anna Maria, and still more, with himself. He strove in vain to explain to himself the conduct of this woman; but whatever explanations he found, they all left him with a feeling of disenchantment, of shame and injured vanity, and, in addition, with a sharp pang of desire inflamed and left unsatisfied. He remembered — though now it was too late — his uncle in Paris and the advice this uncle had given him when he saw him one day at the Palais Royal with an actress well-known for her eccentricity. "I see you are growing up," said the old gentleman, "and beginning to break your neck like the rest of them. Well, well, it's bound to be so, and so let it be. Only one piece of advice for you: beware of silly women." Good and wise old uncle haunted his sleep.

And when this affair had petered out in such a foolish and foolish fashion, he saw clearly, like one woken from a dream

man embraced her as if with a hundred invisible arms. The moisture of his lips mingled with her tears — for she was crying — and with blood — for somehow her mouth had begun to bleed. Yet their lips never parted: indeed their two mouths had become one. This embrace between the young man mad with desire and the swooning woman did not last a full minute. Anna Maria suddenly tore herself away, her eyes staring still more widely, as if they had gazed upon some terrible, unexpected chasm. Her consciousness returned and with it an unexpected strength. In her rage she pushed from her the uncontrolled young man, battering at his chest with both fists, feebly and furiously like an angry child, crying out at each blow:

“No, no, no!”

The great illusion before which everything had gone down was now dissolved. Just as they had not been conscious of sinking to the ground, so now, without knowing how, they found themselves on their feet. She was sobbing with rage and adjusting her hair and her hat, and he, clumsy and confused, brushed the dry pine-needles from her black habit, handed her her whip and helped her out of the hollow. The horses were standing quietly, tossing their heads.

They emerged on to the road and mounted before their escorts could realize that they had ever dismounted. On parting they gave each other one glance more. The young man was redder than usual and blinked in the strong sunlight. Anna Maria was completely changed. Her lips were now so white that they were lost in her pale face, and there was a new, fully “awakened”, look in her eyes, with two black circles about the pupils, in which it was harder than before to penetrate to that hidden gleam. Her whole face was sunken, with an expression of vicious rage and of limitless disgust at herself and everything about her, as if she had long grown old and neglected.

Desfossés, who in other circumstances did not easily lose his presence of mind or his natural cool self-confidence, was genuinely put out of countenance and felt ill at ease. He realized that this was neither coquetterie nor a society woman’s normal fear of humiliation or scandal. He suddenly appeared to himself as something lower and weaker than this frail woman, whose peculiar character and bitterness of heart were to her a world enough to live in apart.

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disaster that this avalanche should be moving towards those very territories which contained his own small sector and his own great responsibility. The morbid need he felt to be initiating something or doing something and the agonizing feeling that he might make a mistake or leave something undone never left him now, even in sleep. The calm and coolness of young Desfossés annoyed him more than usual. To this young man it was perfectly natural that the Imperial Army should find it necessary to make war in some direction and he saw no cause at all in this to alter his manner of life or trend of thought. Daville could have shaken with suppressed rage as he listened to the casual expressions and the witty remarks which were now fashionable among the young men of Paris and which Desfossés used when speaking of the new war, without respect or enthusiasm but also without doubt as to its victorious issue. They filled Daville with subconscious envy and with acute distress at not having anyone to talk to ("to exchange anxieties and hopes") about this war and everything else in the terms and from the viewpoints which were peculiar and familiar to him himself and to his generation. Now more than ever the world seemed to him full of snares and dangers and of those indefinite black thoughts and fears which war spreads throughout a country and introduces into human hearts, particularly those of elderly or tired and enfeebled natures.

To Daville, it appeared at times that he was losing breath, that he was collapsing with fatigue, that he had been marching on like this for years with some shadowy, pitiless battalion with which he was never able to keep in step and which threatened to trample and crush him if once he fell down and did not go on marching. As soon as he was left alone, he would let out a deep breath, exclaiming quietly and rapidly as he did so:

"Ah, dear God, dear God!"

He pronounced these words unconsciously, without any real connexion with what was going on round him at that moment. The words were one with his breathing and sighing.

How was he to avoid stumbling with the exhaustion and the attacks of dizziness which had lasted now for years, and yet how was he to throw the whole thing over and make no further effort or exertion? How was he to see clearly or

the moral repulsiveness of the clumsy attempt on the middle-aged and eccentric Frau Konsul, to which his momentary lack of self-control and his loneliness and boredom here in Travnik had driven him. There now came back to his mind last summer's "*tableau vivant*" in the garden with Jelka, the village girl from Dolac, whom he had forgotten; and more than once that night he found himself jumping suddenly up from the table or from his bed, with the blood pounding in his head, his eyes swimming and his whole being filled with a feeling of shame and anger against himself, a feeling which in young people can be just as strong and vivid as this. Standing in the middle of his room, he cursed himself for having been so idiotically and disgustingly carried off his feet; and at the same time he never ceased to look for explanations of his ill success.

"What kind of a country is this? What kind of a climate?" he asked himself then. "And what kind of women are these? They look at you as innocently and meekly as flowers in the grass, or with so much passion (through the strings of a harp) that your heart melts. But when you meet the entreaty of that look, then they fall on their knees, twisting the whole situation round full circle, and plead with you in such a beseeching voice and with such a sacrificial look that it goes to your heart, the whole affair suddenly fills you with loathing and you lose all desire to live or love; or else they beat you off as if you were a bandit and lash about them like an English boxer."

Thus, on the floor above Daville and his sleeping family, the "young Consul" reasoned with himself and wrestled with his secret distress until he mastered it and it began, like all the troubles of youth, to pass into oblivion.

15

The news and instructions from Paris, which Davillo had recently been receiving with a considerable delay, showed that the great war machine of the Empire was once more on the move, and that in the direction of Austria. Daville felt personally alarmed and menaced. It seemed to him a personal

his part; and no one would ever see or know those tormenting doubts and hesitations which victory had scattered like mist and which he himself was at the moment trying to forget. For a while, but only for a brief while, he would deceive even himself, but soon a new movement of the Imperial war machine would begin and with it a new play of emotions within himself identical with all those that had gone before. And all this was wearing him down and wearing him out and creating a life which to the outward eye was peaceful and happy but in reality was an unendurable torment, painfully at variance with his inner structure and with the whole of his real being.

The Fifth Coalition against Napoleon was formed during that winter and suddenly declared itself in the spring. As he had done four years before, but with even greater speed and audacity, Napoleon replied to the treacherous attack by a lightning blow at Vienna. Now even the uninstructed were shown why the Consulates had been opened in Bosnia and what purpose they were meant to serve.

All contact was broken off between the French and Austrians at Travnik. Their servants did not greet one another, the Consuls avoided meeting each other in the street. On Sundays, during High Mass in the church at Dolac, Madame Daville and Frau von Mitterer and her daughter stood separate and apart from one another. Both Consuls redoubled their efforts with the Vizier and his people, with the Brothers, the Orthodox priests and the leading men of the town. Von Mitterer broadcast the proclamation of the Austrian Emperor and Daville the French communiqué on the opening victory at Eckmühl. Couriers crossed and followed close on each others' heels between Split and Travnik. General Marmont wished at all costs to reach Napoleon's army with his troops from Dalmatia before the Emperor arrived at the decisive battle. To this end he asked Daville for facts about the districts he would have to pass through and continually sent him fresh orders. This tripled Daville's work and made it more difficult, more exacting and more complicated than ever, all the more so since von Mitterer was watching his every step and, as an experienced soldier, adept at frontier intrigues and sallies, placed every possible obstacle in the way of

understand anything in the general scurrying and confusion, and yet again how could he go on marching through exhaustion, paralysis and uncertainty into new obscurities and invisibilities?

It seemed only yesterday that he had listened with excitement to the news of the victory at Austerlitz, accompanied with hopes for peace and a settlement. It seemed only this morning that he had written his verses on the battle of Jena. It seemed only a little while ago that he had read the bulletins about the victory in Spain, the entry into Madrid and the expulsion of the English armies from the Iberian Peninsula. The echo of one exaltation had not died away before it was broken and mingled with the rumour of fresh events. Were the laws of nature really to be altered by force or would everything in the end be smashed against their inflexible constancy? Sometimes it seemed as if the first would happen, sometimes the second: there was no clear conclusion. The mind stood numb and the brain refused to function. Yet in this condition and situation he still continued to step out, with millions of others: he worked and conversed, strove to keep step, to contribute his quota, neither saying nor indicating to anyone his grievous, wretched bewilderment and confusion of soul.

And now, here it was beginning all over again, down to the last detail. The "*Moniteur*" and the "*Journal de l'Empire*" had arrived with articles explaining and justifying the need for a new campaign and forecasting its inevitable success. (Even as he read, it seemed to Daville clear and beyond doubt that it could only end in this one way). Then would follow days and weeks of debate, expectation and doubt. (Why yet another war? How long will it go on? Where will all this lead the world, Napoleon, France, and Daville himself with his family? Will Fortune not betray them this time and will the first defeat not come, heralding the final breakdown?). Then the victory bulletins would appear, with the names of the cities taken and the countries overrun. And finally, complete victory and a conquering peace with territorial acquisitions and fresh promises of a general pacification which never in fact arrived.

And Daville would with the rest, and louder than the rest, celebrate the victory and talk of it as of a thing to be understood in itself and of itself alone and a thing in which he too had taken

his native French pugnacity sustained him and drove him not to let himself be outdistanced in the race. He rolled up his sleeves and returned blow for blow.

Apart from all this, if there had only been the two Consuls, relations between them might not have been so bad. The worst element was the petty officials, agents and servants. These knew no limits in their battering and blackening of each other. Professional zeal and personal vanity carried them away as completely as a sportsman is carried away by his ruling passion and they forgot themselves so far that in their desire to oust and humiliate each other, they degraded and lowered themselves in the eyes of the peasants and of the maliciously rejoicing Turks.

Both Daville and von Mitterer saw clearly how harmful this reckless and unscrupulous manner of conducting the battle between them was to both sides and to the reputation both of Christians and of Europeans generally, and how undignified it was that the two of them, the sole representatives of the civilized world among these barbarians, should wrestle and fight in front of these people who hated, scorned and misunderstood them both, and that they should invoke these same people as their witnesses and their judges. Daville felt this particularly, since his position was the weaker. He decided to draw von Mitterer's attention to this indirectly through Doctor Cologne, who was regarded as a neutral party, and to propose to him that they should both curb their over-zealous followers a little. Desfossés was to speak to Cologne, since Davina and Cologne were permanently at daggers drawn. At the same time, through his devout wife and by any other possible means, he wished to bring influence to bear on the Brothers, and to indicate to them that, as the representatives of the Church, they were sinning in giving such one-sided and exclusive support to one of the belligerents. In order to show the friars how inaccurate were the accusations of impiety against the French régime and in order to place them under a heavier obligation to himself, Daville hit on the idea of obtaining from them a permanent paid chaplain for the French Consulate. Through the parish priest at Dolac he addressed a letter to the bishop at Fojnica. When he received no reply, Madame Daville was obliged to speak on the subject to Fra Ivo and assure him orally how excellent and suitable a thing it would be if the friars were to detail

Marmont's advance through the Lika and Croatia. As the number and difficulty of his tasks increased, Daville's strength, ingenuity and fighting spirit grew with them. With Davna's help he managed to discover and unite all those who from sentiment or interest were hostile to Austria and willing to undertake anything in that direction. He launched appeals to the fortress commanders in the borderland, especially the commander at Novi, the brother of the unfortunate Ahmed Beg Cerić whom he had been unable to rescue, he egged them on to raid Austrian territory and offered to equip them for these attacks.

Von Mitterer, through the Brothers at Livno, sent news and declarations into Dalmatia, then under French occupation; he kept in touch with the Catholic clergy in northern Dalmatia and helped to organize resistance to the French.

All the paid agents and voluntary helpers of both Consulates scattered far and wide on all sides and their work began to make itself felt in a general unrest and in frequent clashes.

The Brothers ceased entirely to see anyone from the French Consulate. Prayers were offered in the monasteries for the victory of Austrian arms over the Jacobin armies and their godless Emperor, Napoleon.

The Consuls visited and received people with whom in other circumstances they would never have had anything to do; they gave presents and scattered bribes. They worked day and night, without too many scruples about the means they employed and without sparing their strength. In this respect the Colonel was in a far more favourable situation. It was true that he was a tired man, oppressed by his family troubles and by ill health, but to him this way of living and fighting was nothing new and it matched his own particular skill and training. When confronted with orders from higher authority, the Colonel immediately forgot both himself and all his family and entered the well-worn rut of the Imperial service along which he jogged without enjoyment or enthusiasm but also without discussion or afterthought. Besides, the Colonel knew the language, the country, the people and conditions and at every step he had no difficulty in finding sincere and disinterested helpers. Daville had none of these advantages; he had to work under far harder conditions. Even so, his alertness of mind, his conscientiousness and

reason there were quite a number of friars and visitors at Dolac that day and this gave Benediction a special solemnity.

Had the choice depended only on her own feelings, Madame Daville would have returned home at once, but considerations of duty required that she should remain for Benediction, lest it should seem that she had come simply for the conversation with Fra Ivo. This normally sensible woman, who was not given to excesses of feeling, had been roused and offended by the priest's attitude. This disagreeable interview had been all the more unpleasant for her in that by upbringing and by nature she was quite unconcerned with general questions or with public business. She stood now in the church by a wooden pillar and listened to the subdued and still ragged chanting of the friars who were kneeling on either side of the high altar. Fra Ivo was officiating. Heavy and thickset as he was, he managed, whenever occasion required, to kneel down lightly and neatly on one knee and rise immediately after: but the woman had before her a vision of his great hand with its gesture of refusal and his eyes shining with pride and obstinacy as he looked at her interpreter during their conversation just now. She had never before seen such a look on anyone's face, lay or clerical.

In the choir the Brothers were chanting softly, in their peasant voices, the Litany of the Virgin. A deep voice began:

— *Sancta Maria* . . .

And all responded in a hoarse chorus:

— *Ora pro nobis*.

The voice continued:

— *Sancta virgo virginum* . . .

— *Ora pro nobis*, answered the other voices in unison.

The suppliant voice went on to enumerate at length the attributes of Mary.

— *Imperatrix Reginarum* . . .

— *Laus sanctarum animarum* . . .

— *Vera salutrix earum* . . .

And after each the choir came in, chanting in unison: *Ora pro nobis*.

She herself wanted to pray, with the familiar Litany she had listened to sometimes in the cold cathedral choir of her

one of the Brothers as chaplain and if they were to modify their attitude towards the French Consulate in general.

Madame Daville went to Dolac one Saturday afternoon, accompanied by an "Illyrian" interpreter and a kavass. She had been careful to choose for this interview a time when there was evening Benediction in the church and not a Saturday when there would be a great many people about and the priest would be busy.

Fra Ivo received the Consul's wife cordially, as he always did. He told her that the bishop's written reply had arrived that morning and that he had just been preparing to deliver it to the Consul-General. The reply was negative, since to their great regret, in these hard times when they were persecuted, poor and few in number, they had not friars enough to meet the minimum needs of their flock. Apart from this, the Turks would at once regard the chaplain as an agent and a spy and the whole Order would have to pay for it. In short, the bishop regretted that he could not meet the French Consul's request, but hoped that he would be rightly understood, etc, etc.

These were the terms of the bishop's letter, but Fra Ivo did not conceal the fact that, even if he could have ventured or had found it possible to do so, he would never have allowed a chaplain of their Order to serve Napoleon's Consulate, as such. Madame Daville tried gently to correct his opinion but the friar, impregnable by sheer weight, remained obdurate. He conceded his recognition and respect to Madame Daville personally, for her sincere and undoubted piety (the Brothers had, in general, far more respect for Madame Daville than for Frau von Mitterer) but insisted stubbornly and sharply on his own point of view. He accompanied his words with a brusque, stabbing movement of his huge, plump hand, from which Madame Daville recoiled involuntarily. It was obvious that the instructions he had had were clear, that his position was firmly decided and that he had no desire to discuss it with anyone, least of all with a woman.

After having told Madame Daville once more that he was always at her service in any case of spiritual need but that on all other points he abode by his point of view, Fra Ivo went into the church, where Benediction was beginning. For some



the road began to slope down. The roofs of Travnik appeared and the thin blue trails of smoke above them; and with them the life of every day returned with its needs and its tasks, far removed from her reflections, doubts and prayers.

About the same time, Desfossés had his talk with Cologne. Before nightfall, perhaps about eight o'clock, he went to see the Doctor, accompanied by a kavass and a manservant with a lantern. The house lay to one side on a steep rise, round which there lay thick darkness and a damp mist. A sound of invisible waters came from spring Šumeć. This noise of water was muffled and transformed by the dark and magnified by the silence. The road was wet and slippery and under the restless, meagre light of the Turkish lantern it looked quite new and strange like some virgin forest entered by men for the first time. The gate too looked equally odd and mysterious. The threshold and the iron rings on the gates were lit up, but all the rest was in gloom: no object could be distinctly seen nor could its true function be guessed at. The door resounded heavily and dully at their knocking. Desfossés felt their batterings to be somehow unmannerly and out-of-place, almost painfully so, and the kavass's excess of zeal struck him as particularly rude and unseemly.

— "Who is knocking?"

The voice came from above, more like an echo of the kavass's banging than a question freely put.

— "The young Consul. Open!" shouted Ali in that disagreeable and strident tone in which juniors always address each other in the presence of a senior.

The men's voices and the sound of distant water, all were like casual, unexpected cries in a forest, proceeding from no known cause and followed by no visible effects. At last the clank of a chain was heard, the scream of a bolt and the creaking of hinges. The gate opened slowly. Behind it stood a man with a lantern, pale and drowsy, wrapped in a shepherd's cloak. The two flickering lights showed the steep courtyard and the low, dark windows on the ground floor. Both lanterns vied with each other in lighting the way for the young Consul. Dazed by this interplay of voices and lights, Desfossés suddenly found himself before

native Avranches. But she could not forget the conversation she had a little while ago or break off the thoughts which mixed into her prayers.

"We all say the same prayers, we are all Christians, of the true Faith, but there are such deep divisions between us when we grow up," she thought, and there rose before her once again the fierce, hard look and the brusque gesture of this same Fra Ivo who was now singing the Litany.

The chant went on with its long catalogue:

— *Sancta Mater Domini...*

— *Sancta Dei genitrix...*

"Yes, one knows of course that these divisions exist, and all these enmities between people, but it's only when one goes out into the world and encounters them oneself, that one sees how big they really are, how deep and impassable. What prayers ought we to pray to fill up and smooth out these rifts between us?" Her practical sense told her that no such prayers existed; but at this point her thoughts stopped short, in fear and helplessness. She whispered quietly, accompanying with her own inaudible voice the steady chanting of the friars which kept recurring like a wave again and again:

— *Ora pro nobis!*

When vespers were finished, she humbly received the blessing from that same hand of Fra Ivo's.

Outside, in front of the church, she found in addition to her own escort Desfossés and a manservant. He had been riding through Dolac and when he heard that Madame Daville was in church, he had decided to wait and see her home to Travnik. She was glad to see the young man's familiar, cheerful face and to hear the sound of a French tongue. They went back to the town along the broad, dusty road. The sun had set, but a strong, yellow radiance shone by reflection over the whole countryside. The clayed road looked red and hot, and the young foliage and the budding blossom on the bushes stood out against the black bark, as if they shone of themselves. The young man walked beside her, ruddy with exercise, and talked with vivacity. Behind them could be heard the footsteps of the servants and the pounding hoofs of Desfossé's horses which were being led by the bridles. The echo of the Litany was still in her ears. And now

as intermediary, that he would discharge the whole business with the utmost scrupulousness. He entirely understood Monsieur Daville's intentions and shared his opinions and agreed that his own antecedents, profession and convictions made him the most suitable person to undertake such a part. It was clearly Cologne's turn, now, to feel satisfied with himself.

The young man listened to him as one listens to the sound of running water, looking vaguely at his long, regular features, with the lively, round eyes, the bloodless lips and the teeth which waggled as he spoke. Age! he thought. The worst that can happen to one is not to die but to grow old, because growing old is an affliction past hope and past cure, it is a lingering death. Only the young man's thoughts on old age were not so much directed towards human destiny in general, or his own in particular, as to some personal misfortune of the Doctor's.

Cologne said: "I do not need many words of explanation. I understand the Consul's situation, as I understand that of any civilized person from the West whose fate compels him to visit this part of the world. To such a man, living in Turkey means walking along a knife edge or roasting over a slow fire. I know that this is so, because we are born on this knife edge and live and die on it and we grow up and are consumed in this fire!"

Through his thoughts on age and on growing old, the young man began to listen more attentively and to grasp the Doctor's words.

"Nobody knows what it means to be born and to live on the margin between two worlds, knowing and understanding both, yet unable to do anything to help them to explain or draw nearer to each other, loving and hating both, wavering and following another's lead one's whole life long, having two homes and yet none, being at home everywhere, yet always remaining a stranger; in short, living torn apart, yet as victim and torturer in one".

The young man listened in amazement. It was as if a third person who had joined in the conversation had spoken these words; there was now not a trace of empty phrases or compliments. There stood before him a man with shining eyes and with long, thin arms outspread, demonstrating how one lived torn apart between two opposed worlds.

the wide, open doors of the great hall, the still air of which was full of smoke and of the pungent odour of tobacco.

In the centre of the room, by a great candelabrum, stood Cologne, tall and bent, and dressed in a numerous and assorted collection of Turkish and European garments. On his head was a black cap, from under which peeped long, sparse tufts of grey hair. The old man made a deep bow and pronounced loud greetings and compliments in that peculiar language of his which might be either corrupt Italian or imperfect French; but they all seemed to the young man superficial and forced, empty formulas which lacked not only sincerity but even proper respect. The man who was uttering them was not really behind them. Then all at once everything which he had encountered in that low, smoke-filled room — the smell and look of the room itself, the man's own speech and appearance crystallized in a single word, so quickly, vividly and clearly that he nearly uttered it aloud — age. Melancholy, gap-toothed, forgetful, lonely, heavy age, which transforms, dissolves and embitters all things — thoughts, sight, movement, sounds — everything down to light and smell themselves.

The old physician ceremoniously offered the young man a chair but himself remained standing, excusing himself on the strength of that excellent old Salernitan saw: "*Post prandium sta*" (After dinner, stand awhile).

Desfossés sat down on a hard chair without arms; but he had a feeling of physical and mental superiority which made his mission appear to him simple and easy, almost agreeable. He started talking with that blind assurance with which young people often do embark upon conversations with seniors who seem to them to be out-of-date and to have reached the end of their tether: they forget that slowness of mind and bodily infirmity are often accompanied by great experience and by an accumulated skill in handling human affairs. Desfossés transmitted Daville's message for von Mitterer, doing his best to make it appear what in fact it was, a well-meant suggestion in their common interest, and not a sign of weakness or panic: and having said his say, he was well content with himself.

As the young man concluded his speech, Cologne was already hastening to assure him how honoured he was at being chosen

They are the shingle between the sea and the land, doomed to eternal rolling and disquiet. They are the "third world" on which has descended the whole of the curse which followed the division of the earth into two worlds. They are . . ."

In high excitement and with fire in his eyes, Desfossés looked at the old man: he was transfigured, as with his arms spread evenly apart in a cross, he searched in vain for his words. Suddenly, in a breaking voice, he concluded:

"We are heroes without fame and martyrs without a crown. But you at least, who are our fellow-believers and kinsmen, you people of the West who are Christians under the same salvation as ourselves, you at least ought to understand us and cherish us and lighten our lot."

The Doctor let his arm fall with an expression of utter hopelessness, of anger almost. There was not a trace of the unsavoury "Illyrian doctor". Here stood a man with a mind of his own and a forceful utterance. Desfossés burned with desire to hear and know more; he had entirely forgotten not only his superior feeling of a little while ago but even where he was and the business on which he had come. He felt that he had sat there far longer than he should have done or had intended to do, but he did not get up.

The old man surveyed him now with a look full of unspoken appeal, as if he were gazing at somebody who was moving further and further away, someone whose going was regretted.

"Yes, sir, you may understand this life of ours but to you it is only an unpleasant dream. You may live here but you know it is only for a time and sooner or later you will go back to your own country, to better conditions and a more civilized life. You will wake up from this nightmare and shake yourself free, but we never shall: it is our only life."

Towards the end of the interview the Doctor became increasingly silent and queer. He sat down, close beside the young man, bending over towards him in an attitude of the deepest confidence, and making signs to him with both hands to remain calm, not to be alarmed at his words and gestures and not to scare away something small, precious and easily frightened which was there, somewhere, on the floor at their feet. With

As often happens with young people, this conversation struck Desfossés as something not entirely accidental but as something which was particularly closely bound up with his own thoughts and with the work he had in view. There were not many opportunities in Travnik for talks of this kind: he was agreeably excited and in his excitement he began to fire off questions, then to make observations of his own and give his own impressions. He spoke as much from inner necessity as from any desire to prolong the conversation. But the old man needed no encouragement to talk. He did not even break off his train of thought. Although he sometimes found himself at a loss for French phrases and mixed Italian phrases up with them, he spoke as if inspired and like one reading from something before him:

"Yes, these are the agonies which torment Christians in the Levant and which you who come from the Christian West can never entirely understand, just as the Turks can understand them still less. It is the lot of Levantines to be *poussière humaine*, human dust, drifting drearily between East and West, belonging to neither and pulverized by both. They are men who know many languages but have no language of their own: they are acquainted with two religions but hold fast to neither. They are victims of the fatal division of mankind into Christian and non-Christian, eternal interpreters and gobetweens, who nevertheless carry within themselves so much that is unclear and inarticulate. They are connoisseurs of East and West alike, and of their customs and beliefs, and yet they are despised and mistrusted by both. One can apply to them the words written six centuries ago by the great Jelaledin, Jelaledin Roumi: 'For I cannot define myself. I am neither a Christian, nor a Jew, nor a Parsee, nor a Mussulman. I am neither of the East nor of the West, neither from the sea nor from dry land.' That is just what they are like. They are a little subsection of humanity, staggering under a double load of original sin: they need saving and redeeming a second time, but no one can see how or through whom it can be done. They are frontier folk, spiritually and physically, from those black and bloody lines of division which through some terrible, absurd misunderstanding have been drawn between man and man, God's creatures, between whom there should not and must not be any such division.

any longer whose they are. Of the mosque itself people know that once upon a time, before the coming of the Turks, it was the Church of St. Catherine. And they believe there still remains in one corner a chamber which no one can open. And if you look a little closer at the stones in the old wall, you will see that they come from Roman ruins and gravestones. And on one stone which has been built into the wall of the mosque enclosure you can read quite clearly the dispassionate, regular Latin words of some broken inscription "*Marco Flavio . . . optimo*". And far down below that, in the hidden foundations, lie great blocks of red granite, remains of a still older cult, a former shrine of the god Mithras. On one of these stones there is a dim relief, in which one can distinguish the young god killing a mighty boar in full career. And who knows what else may be hidden deep down under these foundations? Who knows whose work may be buried there or what vestiges may have been wiped out for ever? And that is only one little patch of ground, in this remote little town. Where are all the innumerable other great settlements up and down the wide world?"

Desfossés looked at the old man, expecting further explanations, but at this point the Doctor suddenly altered his tone and began to talk louder as if any third party might now be allowed to hear what he said:

"You understand, all these things are interlinked, bound up into a whole, and it is only to the outward eye that they seem lost and forgotten, scattered and formless. They all tend, without knowing it, to a single goal, like rays converging to cause some distant, unknown conflagration. You mustn't forget that it is expressly set down in the Koran: 'Perhaps one day God will reconcile you and your enemies and will establish friendship between you. He is powerful, gentle and merciful'. So there's hope, and where there's hope . . . you understand?"

There was a suggestive, triumphant smile in his look, as if he were heartening and reassuring the young man and with his hands he outlined something round in the air before him, as if he wanted to conjure up the closed circle of the universe.

"You understand," the old man went on meaningly and impatiently, as if he thought it unnecessary and impracticable for him to continue trying to express in words anything as evident and certain and so very present and familiar to himself.

his eyes fixed on that precise spot on the carpet, he spoke almost in a whisper but in a voice whose warmth expressed the beauty that lay within.

"Still, in the end, the real, final end, all is for the best, everything works itself out in harmony. Here, it's true, everything does seem out of joint and hopelessly tangled up. '*Un jour tout sera bien, voilà notre espérance*', (One day everything will be all right, so we hope) as your philosopher said. One could not bear to think otherwise. Why should my thoughts, which are good and true, be of less value than exactly the same thoughts coming into the world in Rome or Paris? Is it because they were born in this deep defile known as Traynik? Can it be that these thoughts of mine will never be noted and never anywhere set down in a book? Impossible. In spite of the disjointedness and disorder we see, things are nevertheless all interconnected and work together. Not a single human thought, not a single spiritual effort is wasted. We are all on the right road, and we shall be surprised to find ourselves meeting. Yet we shall all meet and understand, wherever we may have got ourselves to now and however far we may have strayed. That will be a glad encounter indeed, a rare and saving surprise."

Desfossés had found it hard to follow the old man's thoughts but he eagerly desired to hear him further. Without any obvious connection but in the same confidential tone of joyful excitement, Cologne continued. The young man expressed assent, became enthusiastic, and from time to time, driven by some irresistible necessity, he said something himself. He retailed, for example, his observations on the Turbe road of the various historical periods which were manifested in the separate layers of that road. It was the same story he had told Daville in the past, without much success.

"I know, you keep your eyes open. Both the past and the present interest you. You know how to look at things," said the Doctor approvingly. And as if he were telling him some secret about hidden treasure and wished by his smiling glances to indicate more than words could utter, the old man whispered:

"As you pass through the bazaar, stop at the New Mosque. There is a high wall running round the whole of the area. Inside, under an enormous tree, there are tombs and no one remembers



In Europe at this time battles were taking place which were unprecedented in their scale and horror and the historical consequences of which could not yet be grasped. At Constantinople one *coup d'état* succeeded another, Sultans changed and Grand Viziers perished.

At Travnik a general agitation prevailed. As happened every spring, on orders from Constantinople, this year too an army made ready for Serbia, with considerable stir but meagre results. Suleiman Pasha had already started with his small but orderly force. The Vizier was due to move off any day. Actually, Ibrahim Pasha did not know exactly what the plan of campaign was nor how large an army he was to take. He set off simply because it was unthinkable that he should not, because he had received a decree ordering him to do so and because he hoped by his presence to induce the rest to do their duty. But the Janissaries no one could muster or move, since they wriggled out of it in every conceivable way. While some were being called up, others had already decamped: or else they simply raised a storm and a riot, under cover of which they escaped and went home, while the entry remained on the muster roll that they had gone to Serbia.

Both Consuls exerted all their strength to obtain fuller information about the Vizier's intentions, the number and efficiency of the troops under his command and the true situation in the Serbian theatre of war. Both they and their staffs spent days over these topics, which sometimes seemed uncommonly serious and important and sometimes trivial and insignificant.

As soon as the Vizier had followed Suleiman Pasha to the Drina, leaving all authority and public order in the hands of the feeble and cowardly Governor, the Travnik bazaar closed down, suddenly and unexpectedly, for the second time. In reality it was a continuation of the previous year's riot which had never completely died down but had smouldered under a sullen silence, while waiting for a suitable chance to break out afresh. This time the fury of the mob was directed against the Serbs who had been caught in various parts of Bosnia and brought to Travnik upon suspicion of their being in touch with the insurgents in Serbia and preparing a similar rising in Bosnia: but in fact the target was the Ottoman authorities, who were accused of weakness, corruption and treachery.

But as it concluded the conversation changed. Cologna stood up again, thin and erect, bowed and broke off, uttering a few resounding, hollow phrases, assuring Desfossés that he had been honoured by the visit and by the task entrusted to him. And on this they parted.

As he went back to the Consulate, Desfossés walked absent-mindedly on within the circle of light which the kavass's lantern cast in front of him. He was paying no attention to his surroundings. He was thinking of the crazy old Doctor and of his indefinite but lively mind, and trying to sift and distinguish certain thoughts of his own which had unexpectedly arisen and were passing and re-passing in his brain.

16

The news reaching Trávník from Constantinople grew more and more disturbing and confused. Even after Bairaktar's successful stroke and the tragic death of Selim III conditions did not improve. By the end of the year matters had already reached the stage of a second *coup d'état* in which Mustapha Bairaktar had been killed. These perturbations and changes in the distant capital were reflected in this remote province, although after a long delay and in a different and grotesquer form, as if in a distorting mirror. The fear, the discontent, the poverty and the mad rage which sought an outlet in vain tortured and racked the Moslems of the towns. With an accurate presentiment of shocks and disastrous changes to come, they felt themselves betrayed at home and threatened from abroad. The instinct of preservation and self-defence spurred them to movement and action, while prevailing conditions robbed them of the means to action and barred all lines of advance. In consequence, their energies spun round upon themselves and were wasted upon the air. In crowded market-towns among the high hills, where the differing religions and opposing interests lived each in its own quarter, a highly sensitive and critical situation developed, in which anything was possible and in which blind forces clashed and furious riots began to brew.

The two bound men, with their long necks bared, stood erect and motionless, each with an expression of confused and astonished disquiet upon his face. They showed neither fear nor boldness, neither exaltation nor indifference. From the expression on their features they were merely worried men, taken up with thoughts of some distant preoccupation and anxious only to be allowed to think it over quickly and with concentration. It was as if none of the bustle and shouting around them had anything to do with them at all. They merely blinked their eyes and from time to time bowed their heads a little as if to shake off this turmoil and din which prevented their giving their entire attention to their own grave anxiety. On their forehead and temples the branched veins were starting and a plentiful sweat had broken out; and since, being bound, they could not wipe it off, the sweat streamed down their sinewy, unshaven necks in glistening rivulets.

At last the gipsies managed to disentangle their ropes and approached the first of the two condemned men. He backed away slightly, but very slightly, and immediately stood still again, letting them do with him as they would. At the same time the other man also backed away involuntarily, as if he were invisibly tied to the first.

At this point Desfossés, who had hitherto looked calmly on, suddenly turned and dived into another street. He thus did not see the worst and most dreadful part.

The two gipsies slung the noose round their victim's neck but did not hang it up. Instead they withdrew and each began to haul and tighten his end of the rope. The man began to scream and roll his eyes, to kick, to double up and to jerk like a doll in the tightened coil.

There was a continual scurrying and buffeting in the crowd. Everyone was pressing towards the scene of the execution. At the first movements of the tortured man they replied to his cries, gladly and enthusiastically, with laughter and mimicked his movements with their own. But when the convulsions of the strangled wretch became the twitchings of a corpse and his movements became unbelievably terrible and fantastic, those who were nearest began to turn and edge away. No doubt they had wanted to see some notable sight, without knowing exactly what,

Feeling clearly that this rebellion in Serbia threatened them in what they held nearest and dearest, that this Vizier, like all the other Turks, was not taking proper steps for their defence and they themselves had no more strength or will left to protect themselves, the Bosnian Moslems fell into the morbid irritability of all ruling classes which feel themselves threatened and gave themselves up wholly to a pure caprice and to pointless acts of cruelty.

The Serbs, fettered and exhausted men from the Drina or the border country, were brought in daily with serious but ill-defined charges against them, first by ones and twos, then in batches of ten or so. There were a few townsmen and priests among them, but the majority were peasants. There was no question of investigating their crimes or bringing them to trial. During the ensuing days they were thrown to the rioters of the Travnik bazaar, as into the crater of an erupting volcano, and executed without enquiry or trial.

Despite Daville's entreaties and warnings Desfossés went out and saw the gipsy executioners torturing and killing two men in the middle of the cattle-market. From a little hill behind the crowd, who were completely absorbed in what was going on in front of them, he was able to look on unnoticed and had a clear view of the victims, the executioners and the spectators.

The victims were two tall, swarthy men as like as two brothers. As far as one could gather from what was left of their clothing, which had been torn to shreds during their journey and by maltreatment since, they appeared to be small townsmen. They were said to have been caught at a moment when they were trying to smuggle into Serbia in hollow staves certain letters from the Orthodox bishop at Sarajevo.

Tumult and disorder reigned in the market square. Armed guards brought in the two accused, who were barefoot and bare-headed, in cloth trousers and ragged, rent shirts. The guards struggled to clear the space necessary for the hanging. The gipsy executioners were unable to sling the ropes. The seething crowd shouted impartially against the two unfortunates, the police and the gipsies; they surged in every direction and threatened to trample and carry away victims and executioners alike.

"Oh-oh-oh," shouted in chorus a few rash youths who were trying to stem the crowd.

"Sho-o-o-o-vel!" replied the others, who were pushing in the opposite direction.

"Hey, what are you bashing around for? Are you crazy?"

"Crazy, crazy! He's crazy," shouted somebody in a lunatic voice.

"Hit him! Why don't you hit him? He's not your mother's son!" somebody chipped in some way away, thinking the whole thing was a joke.

A scraping and stamping of feet and a few resounding thwacks. Then voices again.

"Well, do you want any more? Do you want me to hit hard?"

"Hi, you there in the jacket!"

"Who's pushing? Come over here, I want a word with you."

"You're just patting him, man. Fetch him one in the pot!"

"Stop! Sto-o-o-op!"

Meanwhile only those who were nearest or those who were looking on from the higher ground all round could see what was happening at the place of execution. Both victims had fallen unconscious, one after the other, and now lay on the ground. The gipsies ran up to them, lifted them, poured water over them, beat them with their fists and scratched them with their nails. As soon as the men came to and stood on their feet, the execution proceeded. Once again the rope was twisted and tightened, once again both men hopped and gurgled, only now for a shorter time and with diminished resistance. Once again the nearest of the spectators began to turn and run away, and the dense crowd would not let them by but turned them back again with curses and blows to face the spectacle from which they wanted to escape.

One little student with a face like a faun was taken with a fit but could not fall to the ground. Wedged and borne along by the swaying, interlocked mass of bodies, he remained upright, though unconscious, with his head thrown back, his face as white as chalk and foam on his lips.

Three times the execution was repeated and each time both men stood quietly and submitted their necks to the rope for

and they had wanted to find relief for themselves and an outlet for their vague but deep and general feeling of discontent. They wanted, and had long desired, to see an enemy laid low and punished. But what had just taken place before their eyes was pain and anguish to them themselves. And so, surprised and frightened, some of the crowd suddenly began to turn their heads away and to move off. But the great mass of the mob, who had not been able to see the spectacle, began to shove and push the front ranks closer and closer, and they in turn, horrified at the nearness of this unexpectedly agonizing sight, turned their backs to the execution and made desperate efforts to fight their way through and escape, striking about them senselessly with their fists as if they were running away from a fire. Not knowing what was spurring these people on and being unable to understand their panic-stricken conduct, the others answered blows with blows and drove them back again to the place from which they were trying to escape. Thus, beside the slow strangulation and the ghastly tattoo of the executed man, a milling and fighting broke out on every side, with a whole succession of individual brawls, arguments and deliberate blows. People were so jammed against each other that they could not raise their arms and hit back in return. They could only clutch, claw, spit and curse, without the least understanding of what was going on and they gazed into each other's distorted faces with the hate which they had stored up for the condemned men. Those who were fleeing in horror from the neighbourhood of the victims, pushed and fought desperately but in silence, while those who were shoving from all sides towards the place of execution — and they were far more numerous — shouted loudly. Many who had been quite far away and had seen nothing either of the execution or of the turmoil which had ensued around it, laughed as they were borne away on the swell which had sprung up and not knowing the horror of what was going on close by, they gave vent to the sort of jests and exclamations which are always to be heard in any swaying, congested crowd. In this way cries and shouts of very different kinds mingled, clashed and crossed — cries of surprise, rage, horror, disgust and fury, chaff and joking, all mingled in those vague, inarticulate outbursts of noise which come from any press of crushed humanity, from squeezed bellies and constricted lungs.

and unreal and all his remarks either sapless and bookish or else meanly and degradingly bureaucratic. He saw that he could not possibly talk to either of them about this, after what his eyes had beheld and after what he had so deeply and inexpressibly felt. After supper, still in the same mood, he entered in his book on Bosnia, faithfully and factually, a special paragraph on "how death sentences are carried out in Bosnia on peasants and rebels."

People began to grow accustomed to hideous and bloody spectacles, to forget the former ones immediately they were over and to want new and more diverse sights of the kind. A new place of execution was made on a bare, level patch of ground between the khan and the Austrian Consulate-General. Here the Vizier's executioner Ekrem cut off the heads which were afterwards stuck on poles. Fits and tears began in von Mitterer's house. Anna Maria flew at her husband, crying "Joseph, for God's sake", up and down the scale, accompanied by floods of tears, and calling him a Robespierre. She began to pack and make ready to escape. Then, worn out and with her fury spent, she fell into her husband's arms, sobbing like a hapless queen who is making ready for the guillotine while the executioner waits at the door. Little Agatha, genuinely frightened and unhappy, sat in her low chair on the veranda and wept silent, copious tears which distressed von Mitterer more than all the scenes made by his wife.

The pale, hunchbacked interpreter, Rotta, ran from the Residency to the police, threatening, bribing, desiring and beseeching them not to conduct executions in front of the Consulate building.

That same evening ten Serb peasants from the frontier district were brought to the square and executed, one by one, by the light of a lantern, to the hisses and catcalls, the thronging and jostling of the assembled Moslems. The heads of the victims were stuck on poles. All night long there was borne into the Consulate the snarling of the hungry pariah dogs who gathered round at once. They could be seen by moonlight leaping up at the pole and tearing lumps of flesh from the severed heads. Next day after a visit by the Consul to the Governor of the city, the poles were removed and executions were discontinued at that spot.

fresh torture, like people who attached great importance to doing everything in their power to ensure that the affair went off correctly. Both were calm and collected, calmer than the gipsies or any of the spectators — just pensive and worried, so worried that even the exertions of their executioners could not entirely wipe from their faces that look of far-away, deep anxiety.

When they were unable to bring them round for a fourth bout of torture, the gipsies approached the fallen men, who were lying on their backs, kicked each of them several times in the flank and so finished them off. Then they wound in their ropes, coiling them round their elbows and waited for the crowd to clear a little before going on with their work. With shifty looks, they puffed greedily and excitedly, between movements, at cigars someone had given them. They seemed to be equally in a rage with this idiotic crowd which hung around them and with the two dead men who lay there, motionless and lost among the innumerable, thronging feet of the curious crowd.

A little later, the two corpses of the unknown victims were hung upon a special gibbet, on a wall below the graveyard, so that they could be clearly seen from all sides. Their bodies had straightened out again and had regained their old appearance: once more they had that look of being straight and thin and like as brothers to each other. They seemed as light as if they were made of paper. Their heads seemed to have grown smaller, as the rope cut deep into their necks. Their faces were pale and peaceful and not blue and distorted like those of men hanged alive. Their legs were together and their feet a little thrust forward as in flight.

It was thus that Desfossés saw them when he came back about midday. One had had the sleeve torn off his dirty shirt and this linen rag fluttered in the weak breeze.

With his jaw firmly set, consciously determined to see this with his own eyes, inwardly shaken but in a calm and solemn frame of mind, the young man gazed aloft at the two bodies. He maintained this grave and solemn mood for some time and returned in the same mood to the Consulate. Daville seemed to him a little man, perplexed and scared by trifles, Davna coarse and ignorant. All Daville's fears seemed to him childish



tated course and reached an unlooked for conclusion, or else they simply and suddenly broke off in mid career. Parties of young lads would set out in a given direction, with a single aim, then, finding some other more exciting spectacle on the way, they would drop everything else and plunge enthusiastically into it, as if they had been making ready for it for weeks. People's keenness was incredible. Everyone burned with desire to contribute to the defence of the Faith and good order and wished, from the highest conviction and with a holy indignation, to participate not only with his eyes but with his hands in the slaying and torturing of the traitors and malefactors who were responsible for all the country's great distresses and for every single misfortune and calamity of every one of them. People went to executions as if they were on pilgrimage to a shrine where miraculous healing and infallible relief were to be had for every pain. Everyone wanted to bring in some rebel or spy and to assist personally in his condemnation and in settling the place of execution and the manner in which the sentence was to be carried out. People quarrelled and fought about these points, transferring all their inflammation and indignation to this difference of opinion between themselves. Ten poor Moslems might be seen round many a condemned and fettered wretch waving their hands excitedly, squabbling and wrangling as they might over a sheep that was for sale. Boys a few feet high called out to each other and ran about breathlessly, clutching their overlong trousers, to dip their knives in the blood of the victims, so as to run home later to their own quarter of the town and scare those who were younger than themselves.

The weather was sunny, the sky without a cloud, the town full of greenery, water, early fruit and flowers. At night the moon shone, clear, glassy and cold. And day and night the bloody carnival went on, in which all were united in a single desire and yet no one could understand his neighbour or recognize himself. The excitement was general and spread outward like an epidemic. Hatreds long stifled now broke out and old vendettas came to life again. Innocent men were caught up in them or fatal substitutions and misunderstandings took place.

The foreigners in both Consulates never left the house. The kavasses brought them news of all that went on. The only

Daville did not leave the house and only the muffled, distant hubbub of the crowd reached him from time to time: but he had exact reports from Davna on the course of the riot and on the series of executions in the town. When he got to know of what was happening in front of the Austrian Consulate, he at once shed all his fears and all his reserve and without taking anyone's advice or asking himself for one instant whether it was in accordance with international practice or the interests of the service, he sat down and wrote von Mitterer a friendly note.

It was one of those situations in life in which Daville knew clearly and directly, without any of his usual hesitation, what he had to do, and risked everything to do it.

The note naturally contained references to Bellona, Goddess of War, and the "clash of arms" which was still in progress, and to the devoted service which each of the two of them owed to his Sovereign. "But," Daville wrote, "I think that I shall not find myself mistaken either in regard to your own sensibility or in regard to my own duty, if, by way of exception and in view of the very special circumstances, I write you these few words. In disgust and indignation, and ourselves the daily victims of some savagery or other, my wife and I, knowing what is happening at your gates, beg you to believe that we are thinking of you and your family at this time. As Christians and Europeans, despite all that parts us at this moment, we should not wish you to be left without some words of sympathy on our part and some signs of condolence in such times as these."

Even so, when he had sent the letter by an intermediary to the Consulate on the other side of the Lašva, Daville began to feel doubts whether he had done right or not.

On that same summer's day, just as von Mitterer received Daville's letter — it was 5 July, 1809 — the battle of Wagram was beginning.

During the ten finest days of July complete anarchy reigned at Travnik. A contagious, general madness drove people out of doors and spurred them on to do improbable and incredible things they had never dreamed of doing. Events developed an impetus of their own, following the logic of blood and suppressed instincts. Situations arose quite haphazard, out of a single cry or out of some young fellow's fooling; they took an unpremedi-

"How's that? Why? You can't hang men who aren't guilty. I shall call in the Governor."

By now Cologne was shouting too. He failed to notice that he was falling deeper and deeper into the fire. A stir began in the group of men. From two minarets, one near by and the other further off, the muezzins were calling to prayers and their voices crossed in mid-air, strained and quavering. A crowd began to gather round the party.

"Eh, while you're trying to save him," shouted the tall man, "I'll string him up on this mulberry here."

"You won't. You daren't. I'll call the police, I'll go to the Governor. Who are you?" the old man cried shrilly, without taking breath.

"I'm someone who's not afraid of you. Get out of my sight while your skin's still whole."

Oaths and cries began to be heard from the rest of the party. More and more people gathered round them from the bazaar. During the dispute, the tall man had covertly tried to catch their eye after each sentence, to see whether they were backing him; and they looked back at him, without moving but with obvious satisfaction.

The tall man made towards an old mulberry tree by the roadside, followed by Cologne and the whole party. Now they were all shouting and waving their hands. Cologne too continued to shout uninterruptedly but nobody was prepared to listen to him, nor would they even allow him to finish.

"Robbers! Bullies! Bandits! You're fouling the Sultan's good name. You bandits! You bastard Turks!" screamed the Doctor.

"Shut up or we'll hang you beside him."

"Who, me? You daren't lay a finger on me, you dirty bastard Turks."

All Cologne's limbs were quivering but he kicked out and laid about him. He and the tall man were now the centre of a milling mass. The man from Fojnica was forgotten and left on one side.

The tall man drew forward a little and called out to his people in a loud voice:

exception was Cologne who could not remain in his damp and lonely dwelling. The old Doctor was unable to sleep or work. He went to the Consulate, but had to pass through infuriated mobs or by the places of execution which kept on bobbing up, now here, now there. Everyone noticed that he was in a state of continual agitation, that his eyes burned with an unhealthy brightness, that he quivered and slavered as he spoke. The mindless current swirling round the valley sucked in the old man as an eddy sucks in a straw.

One day, just at noon, as he was returning from the Consulate, Cologne came across a small party of Turkish rabble in the middle of the bazaar, leading a bound and exhausted man. He had time to dodge into one of the side streets but this party had a disagreeable and invincible fascination for him. At the moment when he was a few paces away from them, a hoarse voice called out from the middle of the group:

"Doctor, Doctor, I've done nothing, don't let me be killed."

As if he were bewitched, Cologne came nearer and his shortsighted eyes recognized a townsman from Fojnica, a Catholic called Kulier. The man was calling out, babbling at random, imploring them to let him go as he was innocent.

Looking to see who in this group he could talk to, Cologne encountered many sour glances. But before he could say or do anything, there stood out from among them a tall man with pale, hollow cheeks who thrust himself in front of the Doctor.

"You go your own way."

His voice shook. He was full of a rage which pierced even through a certain forced and sinister restraint.

Had it not been for this man and his voice perhaps the old Doctor would have continued on his way and left the man from Fojnica to his fate, since he could do nothing to help him. But this voice drew him towards it like a whirlpool. He wanted to say that he knew this Kulier as a loyal subject, to ask what his offence was and where they were taking him, but this tall fellow did not let him speak.

"Go your way, I tell you," said the Turk, raising his voice.

"No, no, you can't do that. Where are you taking that man?"

"Well, if you want to know, I'm taking the dog to be hanged like the other dogs."

A bare half hour later the interpreter returned, pale and unnaturally silent. He had been frightened by strange men, of wild appearance and bristling with arms, who had shouted in his face, "Turn Turk, you Christian, while there's time!" and had behaved as if they were drunk or out of their wits. But he had been far more shaken by what he had seen in Cologne's house.

They had scarcely admitted him into the house, from which a number of completely peaceful and unarmed Moslems had just emerged, when he met the Doctor's servant, the Albanian, in a state of excitement. The hall was upside down and in disorder, but the voice of the Doctor could be heard from within.

The old man was walking up and down the room in great agitation; his face, which was always grey and bloodless, was now slightly flushed; his lower jaw quivered. Looking through half closed eyelids, as if he were gazing into the distance and could see only dimly and distinguish with difficulty, he stared long and keenly at the interpreter in a far from friendly manner; and as soon as Rotta began announcing that he had come on behalf of the Consul-General to see what had happened, Cologne interrupted him excitedly.

"Nothing has happened, nothing, and nothing will happen. No one need worry about me. I am quite capable of looking after myself. Here I stand and keep my ground like a good soldier."

The old man halted, and suddenly threw back his head and flung out his chest, whispering in a broken voice: "Yes, here I stand. Here, here."

"Stand . . . stand, Herr Doktor," stammered the superstitious and timid Rotta; his usual brazen self-assurance had suddenly left him. As he spoke he took a step back and without removing his eyes from the Doctor, he felt behind him with a trembling hand for the latch of the door, repeating over and over again: "Yes, go on standing, standing . . ."

Abandoning his stiff and erect attitude, the old man suddenly leaned towards the terrified Rotta, almost confidentially and with a far gentler expression. On his face, or rather in his eyes, there appeared a meaning smile of triumph, and wagging his finger he said in a low voice, as if he were telling some momentous secret: "Aleikhiselam says: 'Satan courses through

"He cursed the Faith and the men of God. Did you hear him?"

They agreed.

"Hang 'em both, at once."

A movement began round Cologne.

"The Faith? The men of God? I know more about Islam than you do, you Bosnian bastard. I'm . . . I'm . . ." shouted Cologne, disengaging himself, frothing at the mouth and quite out of control.

"Hang the infidel dog."

Above the scuffling and the snatching all that could be heard, indistinctly, were Cologne's words:

" . . . a Moslem . . . I'm a better Moslem than you."

At this point the people from the bazaar took a hand and seized the Doctor from the volunteers. Three of them were now witnesses that the old man had twice clearly and loudly declared that he embraced the true Faith, and as such he became sacrosanct. They now escorted him home with as much attention and ceremony as a young bride. It was indeed necessary, since the old man was beside himself and trembling all over, babbling words without connection or sense.

The surprised and disappointed men who had brought in the man Kulier and had been his accusers, judges and executioners, now released this same fellow unconditionally to make his way home to Fojnica.

The rumour quickly spread that the doctor at the Austrian Consulate had turned Turk. Even in this madhouse of a town, where every day dawned madder than the one before and such things occurred as could not either be fully related or entirely believed, the news of the Doctor's conversion came as a shock. Since no Christian dared set foot in the street, it was impossible to verify or enquire into the case. The Consul sent a servant to Fra Ivo Janković at Dolac, but the priest received the news with scepticism and promised to visit the Consul as soon as the riot had subsided a little, perhaps even the following day.

Rotta had been out before dusk, on the Consul's orders, and had made his way to Cologne's house in the steep quarry.

Bugojno. I tell you, there are no bad or disobedient villagers on my land."

And certainly his long neck and sinewy hands were as coarse and sunburnt as a labourer's.

Nobody was able to answer him, but every man thought only of how to slip out of his sight as quickly as possible, to forget what had happened and to be forgotten himself.

As soon as the riot died down, von Mitterer began to investigate the affair of Cologne's inexplicable conversion and mysterious murder. His action was not prompted by any concern for Cologne himself, whom he had for some time regarded as unreliable and unsuited for the service. Knowing him well, von Mitterer believed the Doctor to have been quite capable of proclaiming himself a Moslem in a moment of controversy: it was equally probable and possible that he might have committed suicide or lost consciousness and fallen into the pit in a moment of excitement. Moreover, now that the riot had subsided, now that matters had taken on a different aspect and people different ideas and attitudes, it was not easy to find out what had happened in completely different circumstances, in that atmosphere of general madness, bloodshed and tumult.

Von Mitterer felt bound, nevertheless, to take all these steps for the honour of the Empire and in order to prevent further attacks on Austrian subjects or Consulate staff. Moreover, Fra Ivo urged him to attempt to elucidate Cologne's conversion and burial, for the sake of the Catholic community.

Suleiman Pasha, who from the very first had been the only person at the Residency who had any sympathy for von Mitterer and had always been more forthcoming and more cordial with him than with Daville, with whom he was obliged to talk though an interpreter and whose looks he did not care for, tried to meet his wishes. But at the same time he advised him frankly not to make the matter worse and not to pursue it too far.

"I know you are bound to intervene on behalf of an Imperial subject," he said to the Consul in his cold, deliberate, clearcut manner, which everyone, including himself, considered infallible. "I know you cannot do otherwise. But it is not worth while making the honour of the Empire too dependent on every individual Imperial subject. There are many kinds of men but the

more tolerable look in each man's eyes — for a time at least. Silence came down over Travnik, a heavy, uniform silence, as if it had never been shaken.

The pacification was hastened by the return of Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak. The presence of his commanding speech and skilled hands soon made itself felt. As soon as he arrived, Suleiman Pasha called together the leading men of the bazaar to ask them what was this pretence of a peaceful town and peaceful folk. He stood before them, spare and simply dressed, just as he had come from the war, tall, with flanks as slim and supple as those of a good greyhound, and great blue eyes, and questioned and scolded them like children. This man who had spent six weeks in real fighting and more recently a fortnight on his estates at Kupres looked sternly at these pale, exhausted men who had suddenly come to their senses, and asked them sharply since when the bazaar had taken it upon itself to judge and execute judgement, who had given them the right to do so and where their wits had been these last ten days.

"It is said that the *rayah* are rebellious, the *rayah* are disobedient and worthless. Maybe. But you should know that the *rayah* do not breathe with their own breath; they listen to the breathing of their master. You know that well. It is always the master who is the first to go bad: the *rayah* only catches the infection. And if once the *rayah* break loose and become puffed up, go straight and find others elsewhere, for of them you'll get no good any more."

Suleiman Pasha spoke as one who had of late seen grave and terrible sights of which they with their narrow Travnik outlook had no idea and which must be explained to them as far as this could be done.

"God — praise and honour be to Him — gave us two things — to hold the land and to give justice. And now you tuck your legs up on your cushions and let a few bastard Turks and rabble do the judging: and see how rebellious these villagers grow. The peasant's business is to work and the Aga's to keep an eye on him, for grass too needs both the dew and the scythe. One doesn't go without the other. Look at me (he turned to the man nearest him, not without pride), fifty-five years to a day, yet by dinner time today I had been the round of all the farms by



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into the house. The hodja had already laid out the corpse, since the three townsmen had made a declaration that the Doctor had, of his own free will, publicly asserted three times over that he was prepared to receive the Moslem faith and that he was a far better Mussulman than many who called themselves Moslems in the Travnik bazaar.

Rotta too, who on learning of the Doctor's death arrived with the kavass Ahmet, saw only a few Moslems drawn up in front of Cologna's house and went back to the Consulate. The kavass stayed behind to attend the funeral.

Had the times been different, or at least a little less disturbed, and had any of the senior officials been at the Residency, the spiritual and temporal authorities would have intervened, the Austrian Consulate would have taken a firmer line, Fra Ivo would have cajoled the higher powers and the men of influence among the Moslems, and the matter would have been cleared up with the hapless Cologna. As it was, in the general insanity and anarchy which still continued, no one was in a state to hear or understand anyone. The riot, which was just beginning to die down, now found new matter to feed on. It seized upon the body of this old man as a welcome trophy and would not have let it go without bloodshed and broken heads.

That morning the Doctor was buried in a green strip of the steep Turkish cemetery. Although the bazaar remained closed, many Moslems left their houses to assist at the burial of the doctor who had been converted to Islam in such an extraordinary and unexpected manner. Most of them, however, were armed volunteers from among those who had wanted to hang him the day before. Serious and sombre, with great ease and rapidity, they took turns in carrying the body, so that the coffin containing the Doctor's shrouded corpse slid over a continuously changing succession of manly shoulders.

So this great riot came to an end in unlooked for and exciting events. The arrests and executions of Serbs ceased. The town relapsed into that shamefaced mood of the morning after, when everyone tries to forget as quickly as possible what has passed; when the gathering of the loudest and worst shouters and bullies subsides into the further suburbs, like water into its channel, and the old order returns, wearing now a better and

the human body like blood'. But Aleikhiselam also says: 'Ye shall in truth see your Lord as ye see the moon at full'."

Here all at once he turned about and assumed a serious, hurt expression. The interpreter, whom it would have taken much less to scare to death, took advantage of the moment to open the door noiselessly and vanish like a ghost into the hall, without farewells or excuses.

Outside the moon was already up. Rotta groped among the side streets, shying at shadows and feeling as if some horror were creeping up on him from behind. When he got home and went in to the Consul he was still unable to pull himself together or to give a clear account of the facts about Cologne and his conversion. He could only assert obstinately that the Doctor had gone mad, and when the Consul wanted to know rather more in detail what were the visible symptoms of his madness, Rotta answered: "Mad, mad. When a man starts talking about God and the devil he must be mad. You ought to have seen him, you ought to have seen him," the interpreter repeated.

By nightfall the news had spread over the entire town that the physician to the Austrian Consulate had publicly expressed his desire to embrace Islam and that he would be solemnly received on the following day. It was fated however, that no such ceremony should ever in fact take place and that, in general, the real truth about the Doctor's "conversion" should never be known.

Next day another rumour spread, even more rapidly than the first, that Cologne had been found dead that morning on a path in his garden beside a stream, in that deep hollow beneath the quarry cliff by which his house lay. His skull had been bashed in. His Albanian servant had been unable to explain either when the Doctor had gone out during the night or how he had fallen into the hollow.

On receiving the news of the Doctor's death, the priest at Dolac went into Travnik to look into case in connection with the burial. Risking attack by the excited mob, Fra Ivo got through to the Doctor's house but was unable to stay there for long. In spite of his considerable weight, he retreated lightly and quickly down the steep road before the staves and cudgels of the enraged Moslems who would not let him so much as peep

other sentence how it would look in his Vice-Consul's eyes. So in the end he preferred to write and fair copy his more important despatches himself.

In short, in every branch of his work, and more important still, in all the inward alarms which were raised in Daville by the events connected with Napoleon's new expedition to Vienna, Desfossés was of no help to him at all and was often a burden and a hindrance. The difference between them was so great and its nature was such that they could not even share their happiness. In the middle of July, just about the time when the riots ceased, when the news arrived of Napoleon's victory at Wagram, and very soon thereafter the news of the truce with Austria, Daville was taken with one of his periodical fits of cheerfulness. Everything seemed to him to have passed off with great good fortune and to have ended well. The only thing which spoiled his good humour was the equanimity of Desfossés who showed no enthusiasm at the victory just as he had felt none of the doubts and fears which had preceded it. To Daville it was painful and incomprehensible to see this young man with the same intelligent, indifferent smile always on his face. "It's as if he had booked victory in advance," Daville said to his wife, having no one else to complain to and being unable to hold his peace any longer.

Once again there came round those warm, rich Travník days towards the end of summer, the finest and best to those who had always enjoyed good fortune, and the least unpleasant to those whose fortune was wretched and grievous summer and winter alike.

In the month of October 1809 peace was concluded at Vienna between Napoleon and the Austrian Court. The "Illyrian Provinces" were created and included Dalmatia and the Lika, and consequently embraced Daville's Consular district as well. A Governor-General and an Intendant-General arrived in Ljubljana, the capital of this new "Illyria", with a whole staff of police, customs and revenue officers, to begin the work of setting up the administration, with particular reference to trade and communication with the Levant. At a still earlier date, General Marmont, the Commander-in-Chief in Dalmatia, who had arrived in time for the Battle of Wagram, had been made

Daville was obliged to repeat to himself at every moment that he was living with a stranger from whom his ideas and his habits divided him by an unbridgeable chasm. Not even the young man's finer traits, which undoubtedly existed and stood out particularly in circumstances like these — his courage, his unselfishness, his presence of mind — not even these attracted Daville, since we fully acknowledge and prize another's excellences only if they present themselves to us in a form which corresponds with our own ideas and inclinations.

As always before, Daville had regarded with bitterness and scorn everything which took place about them, ascribing it all to the native wickedness and barbarous manner of life of these people and concerned only to preserve and defend French interests through it all. Desfossés, on the other hand, with a detachment which horrified Daville, analyzed the various phenomena about him and tried to discover their origin and their explanation in themselves and in the circumstances which had given rise to them, without reference to any loss or advantage, friendship or hostility which he or his Consulate might momentarily derive from them. This cold and indifferent objectivity of the young man's had always confounded Daville and was distasteful to him, all the more so in that he could not fail to see in it at the same time a clear sign of this young man's superiority. In his present condition it was still more vexatious and disagreeable to him.

Every conversation, official, semi-official or unofficial, evoked from Desfossés a multitude of analogies, freely ranging disquisitions and icily impartial conclusions: in the Consul they induced annoyance and a hurt silence which the young man did not even notice. This son of a wealthy family, so gifted in so many directions, behaved, intellectually, like a millionaire; he was self-assured, capricious and prodigal. In the practical work of the Consulate Daville derived no great benefit from him. Although the young man was bound, as a matter of official duty, to copy fair the Consul's reports, Daville had avoided assigning this work to him. As he wrote the draft, he had reflected that this young fellow whose mind seemed to have a hundred eyes would critically consider his Consul's report as he copied it. Daville was angry with himself but he could not help thinking at every

Daville had always felt an unaccountable uneasiness at this peculiar smile which never left the Secretary's face, while his eyes remained diabolically aslant and a trifle asquint. After every interview with him Daville felt bewildered and in some way defrauded. Every such interview, instead of leading to a decisive reply, would alarm him with fresh questions and fresh obscurities: yet the Secretary was the only man at the Residency who would and could talk business.

As soon as peace was concluded, contact was reestablished between the two Consulates. The Consuls met and expressed in many words their precarious joy at the attainment of peace, hiding under these exaggerated cries of enthusiasm their embarrassment at all they had been engineering against each other during these last months. Daville strove not to offend von Mitterer by his behaviour as the winning side, while not losing any of the superior advantage which victory gave him. The Colonel expressed himself on every subject with the greatest caution, like one who wishes to make as few concessions as possible to an unfavourable present and expects much from the future. Both concealed their true opinions and their real fears under a veil of melancholy small talk of the kind to which elderly people often resort when they still hope for something from life but are conscious of their helplessness.

Frau von Mitterer had not yet exchanged visits with Madame Daville and had luckily avoided encountering Desfossés who had, of course, been "dead" to her since the spring and laid to rest in the huge necropolis of her previous disenchantments. Throughout the Austrian campaign she had been obstinately and aggressively "heart and soul on the side of the great and incomparable Corsican" and had thereby made von Mitterer's life a burden day and night, since even within the four walls of his bedroom he could not bear indiscreet talk and every unreasonable word caused him physical pain.

This summer Anna Maria had returned to her old passion — a love for animals. At every step her morbidly exaggerated pity for draught oxen, dogs, cats and cattle kept on breaking out. The sight of mangy, overdriven young oxen wearily plying their stringy legs, while swarms of flies buzzed in the tender places about their patient eyes, threw Anna Maria into genuine

a Marshal. Seeing all this going on around him, Daville had the melancholy but agreeable feeling of one who has contributed to the victory and renown of others while himself remaining in the shadows, unhonoured and unrewarded. This feeling was grateful to him and made it easier to bear his Bosnian troubles which no victory could do much to alter. What distressed him now, as it had always done previously, and what he never ventured to admit or confide to anyone, was the question: Is this at last the final victory and how long will this peace endure? To this question, on which depended not only his own peace of mind but the future of his children, he was nowhere able to find the answer, either within himself or outside.

At an especially solemn audience Daville informed the Vizier of the details of Napoleon's victories and the provisions of the Peace of Vienna, particularly in so far as they related to the territories bordering directly on Bosnia. The Vizier offered his congratulations on the victories and expressed his satisfaction that their neighbourly relations would continue and that, under French rule, peace and good order would now prevail in the territories around Bosnia.

But all these words, "war" and "peace" and "victory" were dead and distant terms on the Vizier's lips and he uttered them in a cold, hard voice, with a stony expression on his face, as if it were a question of events from the remote past.

The Vizier's Secretary, Tahir Beg, with whom Daville had a conversation the same day, was far livelier and more talkative. He enquired about the situation in Spain and the state of affairs in Poland; he asked for particulars of the organization of the government in the new Illyrian Provinces. It was clear that he wished to inform himself and that he was drawing his own comparisons, but all his affable loquacity and his intelligent enquiries revealed no more than the Vizier's mute, dead indifference. It could be deduced from his conversation that he as yet saw no end to the war or to Napoleon's conquests. And when Daville wished to force him to express himself more frankly, the Secretary evaded giving a reply.

"Your Emperor is the victor and everyone sees the victor in shining colours, or as the Persian poet says: 'The victor's face is like a rose'," concluded the Secretary with a sly smile.



hand and shook it on the ground, cursed poverty and Him who inflicted it on the world and then made straight for Anna Maria with his whip in his left hand.

"Get out of my sight, woman, and don't come making yourself a nuisance, or by God, if you . . ."

As he said this, the carter gave a flourish of his whip. Standing slightly above him and quite near, Anna Maria looked into Žvalo's face, wrinkled and distorted in a grimace, covered with pockmarks, scars, sweat and dust, a wicked and angry but above all a weary face, almost weeping with fatigue, like a runner who has just won a race. Just then the kavass came running up in alarm, beat off the frantic man and led Anna Maria away to their gates weeping aloud in helpless anger.

For two days she trembled at the memory of that scene and begged the Consul through her tears to have all these people drastically punished for their cruelty and for the insults inflicted on his wife. At night she started up from sleep and jumped out of bed, screaming, as she drove Žvalo's face from her sight.

The Colonel calmed his wife with kindly words, although he knew there was nothing he could do. The oats they had been carting were destined for the Vizier's granary. Žvalo was a man of no reputation against whom nothing could be done and with whom it was out of the question to embark on a dispute. Finally, the chief fault lay with his wife who, as so many times before in other circumstances, had meddled in the wrong way in matters with which she should not have concerned herself, and was now, as usual, quite inaccessible to any sort of argument or explanation. And so he soothed her as best he could, promising her everything, as one might a child, patiently enduring the personal reproaches and taunts which were levelled at him, and waiting for her to forget her obsession.

Meanwhile, there was news at the French Consulate. Madame Daville was in the fourth month of her pregnancy. Almost unchanged, as frail and light as ever, she moved rapidly and noiselessly about the great house and the Consulate garden, making arrangements, issuing stores, providing for emergencies, giving orders. She was having a difficult time with this fourth child, but all this work of hers and even the physical discomforts of pregnancy helped her to bear more easily her grief for the

nervous fits. Carried away by her passionate nature, she busied herself about these creatures no matter what the place or the circumstances and without any moderation or compunction, and in this way she met with a good many disappointments. She collected lame dogs and mangy cats and treated and tended them. She fed the birds, which were in any case cheerful and sleek. She fell upon the peasant women who carried chickens slung over their shoulders and hanging head downwards by their feet. She stopped overloaded carts and overburdened horses in the streets and urged the peasant to lighten them and salve their sores, to ease the harness which was rubbing or the girth which was pinching. All these were difficult and hopeless proceedings in this country. Nobody could understand them and they were bound to lead to ludicrous scenes and unseemly disputes.

One day, in a steep alley, the Consul's wife was watching a long wagon overloaded with sacks of corn. Two oxen were struggling in vain to drag the load up the hill. Then they brought an underfed horse, attached it in front of the oxen and began with shouts to drive it up the slope. The peasant who was walking beside the oxen struck them, now on their wasted flanks, now on the tender parts of their muzzles, and the horse was belaboured with a whip by a sturdy Moslem from the town, sunburnt and stripped to the waist, a certain Ibro Žvalo, the lowest of the low, a drunken carter, who occasionally acted also as hangman and took over from the gipsies.

The oxen and the horse in front of them were unable to unite and pull together. Each time the peasant ran and put a stone under the back wheel. The carter swore hoarsely and declared that the ox on the left was shirking and generally not pulling its weight. He made one more effort but the left-hand ox failed and his forelegs gave at the knees. The other ox and the horse went on pulling. The Consul's wife cried out, ran forward and with tears in her eyes began to shout at the carter and the peasant. The peasant put another stone under the wheel and stared in surprise at the foreign lady. But Žvalo, all sweaty and in a fury with the ox which was only pretending to haul, turned the full force of his rage on the Consul's wife, wiped the sweat from his forehead with the crooked finger of his right

manner" could be viewed from close to and one more conversation and argument could be held with "*Monsieur mon adversaire*", Fra Julian.

It was a warm and fine festival day in the best season of the year, when the fruit by now is ripe but the leaves are still green. The squat, whitewashed monastery church quickly filled with peasants in their clean holiday clothes, in which white was predominant. Before High Mass began, Madame Daville too went into the church. Desfossés remained in the plum orchard with Fra Julian, who was at leisure. Here they walked up and down conversing. As they always did whenever they met, they discussed the relations between Napoleon and the Church, then Bosnia, then the profession and place of friars in society and the future of this people of all three faiths.

In the church all the windows were open and from time to time there came to them the sound of the server's bell or the rough old voice of the Guardian singing Mass.

These two young men found as much enjoyment in arguing as children in play; and their argument, conducted in bad Italian and full of naïvety, of bold assertions and barren obstinacy, moved always in the same circle and always came back to the point it started from.

"You can't possibly understand us," the friar replied to all Desfossés' observations.

"I believe that during this time I have got to know conditions in your country well and that, unlike many other foreigners, I have had some feeling for the good qualities which lie hidden in this country as well for the shortcomings and backwardnesses which a foreigner is so quick to see and so swift to condemn. But let me tell you, I often find it hard to understand the position which you friars take up."

"And I tell you that you can't possibly understand."

"But I do understand, Fra Julian; only what I see and grasp I can't approve. Your country needs schools, roads, doctors, contact with the outer world, work and movement. I know that as long as Turkish rule lasts and there is no communication between Bosnia and Europe, you can't achieve and realize any of these things. But you, as the only educated people in the country, ought to prepare the people for it, you ought to be guiding them

child she had lost so suddenly the previous autumn and of whom she continually thought but never spoke.

Young Desfossés was spending his last days in Travnik. He was only waiting to fall in with the first courier from Constantinople or Split to Paris and then to set off in his company. He had been transferred to the Ministry but he had already been notified that during the course of the year he would be posted to the Embassy at Constantinople. The material for his book on Bosnia was fully completed. He was content at having made the acquaintance of this country and happy at being able to leave it. He had fought against its silence and against manifold privations and now departed cheerful and unbeaten.

Before his departure, on the Feast of the Assumption, he visited the monastery at Guča Gora with Madame Daville. Daville himself had not wished to go with them on account of the extremely cool relations between the Consulate and the Brothers: and in fact those relations were something more than cool. The controversy between the French Imperial Government and the Vatican was just then at its height. The Pope had been banished, Napoleon excommunicated; and the Brothers had not been near the Consulate for months. On the other hand, thanks to Madame Daville, the friars at Guča Gora received them kindly. Desfossés found himself obliged to admire the way in which the Brothers managed to distinguish between what was owing to these guests of theirs as individuals and the obligations which their profession and their high conception of their duty laid upon them. There appeared in their bearing both that degree of reserve and offended dignity which their station required and the degree of cordiality demanded by the laws of old-fashioned hospitality and fundamental humanity which are bound to prevail over all transient differences and temporary conditions. A little of both appeared, each in due measure, and both were blended together into a perfect, rounded whole and found expression in an unforced deportment and in free, natural gestures and facial expressions. One would not have looked for so much composure and such innate sense of proportion in these coarse, heavy, quick-tempered men with their unkempt whiskers and their comically shorn round heads.

Here once again was to be seen the piety of the Catholic peasantry, the life of the Franciscan Order "after the Bosnian

which have ceased to exist elsewhere, which will haunt it, like ghosts, preventing its normal development, and will make of it an old-fashioned curiosity, the prey of every comer just as today it is the prey of the Turk. And these people don't deserve that. You can see for yourself that there is not a single nation or country in Europe which is planning its progress on a religious basis . . ."

"That's what is so disastrous."

"No, the disaster is living like this."

"The disaster lies in living without God and not believing the faith of your fathers. In spite of all our sins and shortcomings we have not lost our belief and it can be said of us '*Multum peccavit sed fidem non negavit*', 'He sinned much but did not deny his faith'," Fra Julian broke in, satisfying his passion for quotations.

The young men's dispute had got back to its starting point. Both believed firmly in what they were asserting, but neither had expressed himself clearly nor listened attentively to what the other was saying.

Desfossés had halted by an old plum tree, covered and overgrown with a thick greenish lichen.

"Can it never have entered your head that one day, when the Turkish Empire falls and abandons these countries, these peoples who are now under Turkish rule, bearing different names and confessing different faiths, are bound to find some common basis for their existence, some broader, better, more rational, more humane rule of life . . ."

"We Catholics have long had such a rule — the *Credo* of the Roman Catholic Church. We need no better."

"But you know that all your compatriots in Bosnia and the Balkans do not belong to that Church and never will, all of them, belong to it. You can see that no one in Europe any longer finds in it his fundamental bond of unity. So one must look for some other common denominator."

The singing of the congregation came echoing from the church and interrupted them. Waveringly and raggedly at first, then more and more strongly and in unison men's and women's voice rang intermingled, with a peasant monotony and droning on the note: "Hai-ai-ail body of Je-e-esus!"

in that direction. Instead of that, you lend yourselves to the feudal, conservative policy of the reactionary Powers of Europe and want to tie yourselves to the part of Europe which is doomed to destruction. That is incomprehensible, because your people are not encumbered with traditions or with class prejudices and their place from all points of view is by the side of the free and enlightened states and forces of Europe . . .”

“What good will enlightenment do us without faith in God?” the friar broke in. “Even in Europe this enlightenment will last only a short while and while it lasts it will only bring unrest and unhappiness.”

“You’re wrong, my dear Fra Julian, you’re absolutely wrong. A little more of this unrest would have done no harm to you people here either. You see the population of Bosnia divided between three or even four religions, which are divided and in bloody conflict against each other, and all of them cut off by an impassable wall from Europe, that is to say from the world and life. Take care lest, in the eyes of history, you friars have to answer for the sin of having failed to grasp this, of having led your people in the wrong direction and not having prepared them in time for what is inescapably in store for them. More and more one hears talk of liberty and liberation among the Christians of the Turkish Empire; and one day, certainly, liberty is bound to come to these countries. But it was said long ago that it is not enough to achieve liberty, what is far more important is to become worthy to be free. Without a modern education and liberal ideas it will not help you in the least if you free yourselves from Ottoman government. In the course of centuries your people have become so assimilated to their oppressors that it will profit them little if one day the Turks abandon them, leaving them not only with their own defects as a subject people but with the Turkish vices as well — idleness, intolerance, the spirit of violence and the cult of brute force. That, really, would not be liberation, since you would not be worthy of liberty and would not know how to enjoy it; you would be just the same as the Turks, knowing only the life of slavery or the enslaving of others. Without doubt your country will one day enter the European family but it may be that it will enter it divided and weighed down by an inheritance of ideas, habits and tendencies

"But, my dear Father Julian, there have been no Jacobin Clubs in France for a long time past."

"Perhaps not. They've all gone into the Ministries and the schools."

"But you people here haven't even any schools. You have nothing. And one day, when civilization reaches you, you will no longer be able to receive it. You will remain cut off, bewildered, a shapeless mass without direction or without any organic link with the rest of mankind or your own countrymen or even with your own immediate fellow-citizens."

"But with faith in God, Monsieur."

"Oh, faith, faith! But you aren't the only people who believe in God. Millions of people believe, each after his manner. But that doesn't give a man the right to cut himself off and shut himself up in an unwholesome sort of pride, turning his back on the rest of mankind, often on those nearest to him."

People began to come out of the church, although the peasant singing still went echoing on like a swaying bell whose oscillations are growing fainter and fainter. Madame Daville also appeared and broke up this endless discussion.

They lunched in the monastery and then started back to Travnik. Fra Julian and Desfossés were still twitting each other all through lunch. Then they parted, for ever, taking leave of each other as the best of friends.

Daville took Desfossés to an audience with the Vizier to pay his respects and take his leave. He thus saw Ibrahim Pasha once more. The Vizier was graver and gloomier than ever before; he talked in a deep, hoarse voice and spilt out his words slowly, with a prolonged movement of the lower jaw, as if he were chewing them. With his red, tired eyes he gazed at the young man with an effort, almost angrily. His mind was obviously far away; he found it hard to take in this young man who was setting off somewhere else, saying goodbye and taking the road. He was not even concerned to understand but only to be quit as soon as possible.

The official visit to the Austrian Consul was also quickly over and passed off well. The Colonel received him with a certain melancholy dignity, but amiably, and expressed regret that Frau von Mitterer was not able to see him too, owing to a severe and persistent headache.

The singing grew louder and louder. The squat, low-built church without a belfry, with a black wooden roof and the choir slightly at an angle, thundered and echoed like a ship under weigh, with her sails spread to the wind and a freight of invisible singers.

They both stopped for a moment in their talk. Desfossés wanted to know the words of the hymn the congregation were singing with such devout exaltation. The friar translated it to him word for word. Its general sense reminded him of the ancient Church hymn:

*Ave verum corpus natum  
De Maria virgine . . .*

While the friar was searching for words for the second verse, the young man followed his efforts with only half his attention: in reality he was listening only to the heavy, simple, melancholy, austere music which sounded to him now like the united bleatings of an innumerable flock of sheep, now like the moaning of the wind in black forests. At the same time he asked himself whether it was possible that this mournful shepherd's cry with which the wizened church was resounding could be expressing the same thought and the same faith as the chanting of the sleek and learned canons or the pale young priests in French cathedrals. "An *Urjammer*, a howling from before the beginning of time!" he thought to himself, remembering the verdict of Daville and von Mitterer on Musa's singing, and involuntarily he moved deeper into the plum orchard, fleeing from the music as a man turns his head away from some unspeakably wretched spot.

At this point Desfossés and the friar resumed their conversation, exchanging blows which left each of them standing where he stood before.

"Ever since I came to Bosnia, I have asked myself how it is that you friars, who have seen the world and have had some schooling, and are essentially good men, real altruists, have not a broader, freer outlook, how it is that you do not grasp the needs of the age, do not feel the need for man to draw nearer to man, as such, and for all of us to seek together for a nobler, saner way of life . . ."

"What, with the Jacobin Clubs!"



"But, my dear Father Julian, there have been no Jacobin Clubs in France for a long time past."

"Perhaps not. They've all gone into the Ministries and the schools."

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With Daville it was a harder and more wearisome business. Besides written despatches the young man had to take with him a number of verbal messages, very involved and very carefully worded. As the day of departure drew near, these messages were altered and had more and more qualifications and fresh recommendations added to them. In the end the young man had no clear idea what he was to say about life at Travnik and the work of the Consulate, as the Consul kept on giving him innumerable complaints, requests, observations and cautions. Some of these were for the Minister personally, some for the Minister and the Ministry, some only for Desfossés himself, some for the world in general. The carefulness, subtlety and exactitude of these innumerable messages muddled the young man and drove him to yawn and think of other things.

On the last day of October the Vice-Consul left, amidst frost and an early snowstorm, as he had come. Travnik is a town which does not gradually sink out of the departing traveller's sight but vanishes suddenly into its hole. In the same way it foundered in the young man's memory. The last he saw of it was the citadel, squat and compact as a helmet, and beside it a mosque with its minaret, slender and charming like a plume. To the right of the citadel, in the quarry on the hillside, could be seen the great, tumbledown house where he had once visited Cologne. Desfossés thought of him, as he went along the good, level road towards the Sepulchres: he thought of his end and of that strange nocturnal conversation with him.

"... You live here, but you know that sooner or later you will return home, to better conditions and a better life. You will wake up from this nightmare and shake it off, but we never will, since for us it is the only life."

As on that night when he had sat beside him in the smoke-filled room, he felt once again that breath which hovered round the Doctor — that feeling of some great excitement — and heard his warm, confidential whisper:

"In the end, the true and final end, everything is still for the best and finds a peaceful solution."

So Desfossés left Travnik, remembering only, out of it all, the unhappy "Illyrian Doctor" and thinking of him for a moment. But it was only a moment, since youth does not dwell on memories nor linger long on the same thoughts.

From the earliest days family life had been firmly established at the French Consulate, that real family life which depends so much on the wife and in which no changes or shocks can prevail against the living reality of family feeling, a life with births, deaths, griefs and joys and with beauties unknown to the outer world. This life radiated outside the Consulate and reached what no other thing could have managed to reach, no force, no bribe, no persuasion. To some extent at least it brought the inhabitants of the Consulate closer to the people of the town, and that despite all the hatred which, as we have seen, always continued against the Consulate as such.

Even in the previous year, when the Daville family had unexpectedly lost a child, all the details of this bereavement had been known in every house, without distinction, and every family had taken a lively and sympathetic interest in it. For a long time after people had turned with compassion and sympathy to look after Madame Daville on her rare excursions into the town. Furthermore, first the servants in the house, then the women of Dolac and Travnik — particularly the Jewish women — had spread throughout the town tales of the harmonious family life and the "golden touch" of Madame Daville, her skill, her thrift, her housekeeping and the cleanliness of her house. Even in Moslem houses, where no one ever mentioned the foreign Consulates without spitting to avert the evil eye, it was known in the utmost detail how the French Consul's wife bathed her children and put them to bed, what sort of frocks they wore, how their hair was done and the colour of the ribbons they wore in it.

It was natural, in consequence, that the women in every home should have followed the pregnancy and childbirth of Madame Daville with as much anxious attention as if they were those of some friend and neighbour. Conjectures were made as to how far gone the Consul's wife might be and tales were told of how she passed the time, of every change in her condition and of the preparations she was making for her baby. It then became clear what great and important matters birth and motherhood were in the lives of these people, lives which apart from them were so lacking in change and in joy.

When the time came, old Matišićka was up at the Consulate; she was the widow of a respected but decayed merchant and was considered the best midwife in the whole of Dolac. This old woman, without whom any confinement was unthinkable in well-to-do homes, spread still further tales of Madame Daville as mother and housewife. She described in detail the order and all the neatness and daintiness which reigned in her house; the house was "as clean as Paradise", it smelt so sweet, it was heated and lighted down to the last cranny. She told, too, of the Consul's wife who down to the last minute, and even in her pangs and from her bed, was giving orders and directions about everything, making her commands known simply by her eyes; she told of her piety and her incredible steadfastness in the endurance of pain, and last, of the Consul's attitude, so dignified and full of love, "you'd not find the like in our own menfolk" . . . For years after old Matišićka used to set before young mothers who grew too excited and gave way to panic and pain the example of the French Consul's wife, to shame and calm them.

The child which came into the world at the end of February was a girl. Thereupon visits of congratulation began to arrive from the homes of Travnik and Dolac and it became evident to what an extent people were, if not reconciled to the existence of the Consulate, at least neighbourly in their feelings for the Daville family. The rich burghers' wives of Dolac came, all rosy and rustling, in satin mantles lined with fur, moving slowly and solemnly like ducks on slippery ice. Behind each of them there trod gingerly a frozen little page, with his ears burning with cold and a drip congealing on the tip of his nose which he was unable to wipe off because he was carrying before him in his outstretched hands parcels of presents. Many of the Begs' wives had sent gifts and a gipsy maid to ask how the Consul's wife was. The presents were set out in the birth chamber — copper bowls with sweets, cakes made in thin layers, as if they were thin slices of wood stuck together; embroideries and rolls of fine silk; wooden and glass flagons of brandy or sweet wine, stoppered with a few leaves of some ornamental plant.

As once in the mourning for the death of the Daville's little son, so on this occasion Frau von Mitterer took a lively interest in the happy event. She brought as a present for the child a beautiful

and costly Italian gold plaque, with flowers in black enamel and diamonds; but at the same time she told the confused and touching story of the plaque. Anna Maria had called several times during these days and had been a little disappointed that everything had passed off so simply, easily and smoothly, with no unforeseen incidents or causes for excitement. She sat beside Madame Daville and talked at large and disconnectedly about what lay before the little creature, of the lot of women in society and of destiny in general. Madame Daville, slight and pale, looked and listened from her sheets without a sign of understanding.

The biggest and finest of the birthday presents came from the Vizier. It was a huge bowl full of sweets, wrapped up, first in silk ribbon and then in a piece of pale red Brusa brocade. The bowl was carried in by a number of servants, preceded by one of the Residency officials. In this order they passed through the whole length of the bazaar, just before noon.

Davna, who always knew everything, had also got to hear of the difficulties they had had in getting the bowl out of the Residency. These difficulties had been with the Treasurer. As always, Baki had been trying to reduce every form of expenditure and to take something off every present the Vizier made. There had ensued the choosing of a suitable bowl and some consultation about the piece of material which was to be presented. The Vizier had ordered that there were to be sweets in the biggest bowl to be found in the Residency. Baki had first attempted to show that there was no need to send anything, since it was not the custom to do so among the Franks; when this proved fruitless, he had hidden the largest bowl and substituted something smaller, but Tahir Beg's servants had found it. The Treasurer had cried out in a squeaky voice, half-stifled with rage:

"You can take a bigger one still. Give 'em the whole place, you'd better. Give it all away in presents, spend the lot. That's the way to ruin!"

When he saw that they were choosing the best piece of stuff for a covering, he cried out again, threw himself on the floor and lay on the silk, wrapping the ends of it round him.

"No, no, you shan't, I won't let it go. You robbers, you'll eat us out of house and home. Why don't you give away something of your own?"

They hardly managed to separate him from the precious piece of stuff and to cover the bowl with it. Baki was left screaming like a wounded man and cursing all the Consuls and Consulates of this world, all births and nursing mothers, all silly customs and birthday visits, and his own deplorable Vizier himself who had no better idea of how to guard and preserve the little he possessed than by listening to that crazy spendthrift the Secretary and showering money and presents right and left, on Moslems and infidels alike.

The child which had been born in the French Consulate was christened a month later, on the lifting of the cold weather which that year lasted until the very end of the winter. The little girl received at the font the names Eugenie Stephanie Annunziata and was entered in the baptismal register of the parish of Dolac on March 25, 1810, being the Feast of the Annunciation.

That year, which was a year of peace, full of good expectations, brought to everyone something of what they wished and looked for. Von Mitterer at last received clear instructions how he should conduct himself with the French Consul ("In your private relations you may be friendly and may even go so far as to be cordial, but in public, before Turks or Christians, you should display no signs of friendship, but rather a certain dignified coolness and reserve, etc. etc."). Armed with these directions, von Mitterer moved more easily and, up to a point at least, more naturally. His only trouble was with Anna Maria who never conformed to any instructions or paid the least regard to limit and measure.

The betrothal and marriage of the Austrian princess Marie Louise to Napoleon were subjects of great emotion to Anna Maria. She followed every detail of the ceremonies in the Vienna newspapers, knew the names of all the personages who took part in them and remembered every word which, according to the newspaper reports, was uttered on that occasion. And when she read somewhere how Napoleon, unable to wait for the arrival of his Imperial bride at the appointed spot, had hastened off in an ordinary carriage, incognito, to meet her and had burst into her coach somewhere along the middle of the route, Anna Maria wept with enthusiasm and rushed into her husband's study like a whirlwind to tell him how right she had always been in considering the Corsican a remarkable man and a unique example of greatness and sensibility.

Although it was Holy Week, Anna Maria paid a visit to Madame Daville to tell her everything she had heard and read and to share with her her own feelings of wonder and enthusiasm. Madame Daville was taking advantage of these unusually sunny April days to work in the garden. From their very first year all work on the flowers and in the garden had been carried out for Madame Daville by the deaf-mute gardener Munib, known as Mundjar. Madame Daville had grown so used to him that she found it very easy, by signs, faces and gestures to come to an understanding with him on all that concerned gardening. Nor was this all. In the same language of signs they used to converse on other matters, on happenings in the town, on the gardens at the Residency and the Austrian Consulate, but more especially about children.

Mundjar lived with his young wife in one of those poverty-stricken hovels below Osoje. Everything about their house was clean and orderly and his wife was a healthy, good-looking, honest woman, but they had no children. It was their great sorrow. For that reason Mundjar gazed longingly at Madame Daville's children whenever they came to watch him at his work. Always clean, neat and active, he was as busy as a mole and without interrupting his work he would smile at them with his flaming, wrinkled face, as only those can smile who have no power of speech.

With her big gardener's straw hat on her head, Madame Daville would stand by him as he dug, watching the manuring and herself crumbling the clods of earth and preparing suitable beds for a special variety of hyacinth she had managed to get that spring. When it was announced to her that Frau von Mitterer had called, she received the news as one of Nature's crosses or contrarieties and went in to change.

In a light, warm corner, where the windows and walls were hung with white linen, the two Consuls' wives sat to exchange innumerable words and fine sentiments. In this Anna Maria easily took the lead, since her eloquence and her sensibility simply dazed Madame Daville. Their talk was solely of the Imperial marriage. There was nothing Frau von Mitterer did not know. She knew the number and rank of the persons present in the church at the time of Napoleon's wedding, the length of Marie

Louise's Imperial mantle, which was upheld by five real queens and was of heavy velvet, nine feet long, with golden bees embroidered on it, the same as those which are to be seen in the arms of the Barberini family, from which, as everyone knows, there have come innumerable Popes and rulers, who, once again, as everyone knows . . .

Frau von Mitterer's speech ended up somewhere in the remote past and with an unintelligible cry of pure enthusiasm.

"Ah, we should be glad that we live in these great times, although we ourselves, perhaps, do not realize and cannot gauge their real greatness," said Anna Maria embracing Madame Daville, who endured it all being unable to protect or defend herself and who was in any case always happy to be alive, even without Imperial bridals and historical facts, so long as the children were well and everything was in order in the house.

Next came the story of the great Emperor who, like any ordinary traveller, and in a plain uniform, hastened along the highway and burst unexpectedly into the carriage of his Imperial *fiancée*, being unable to wait for the hour of the ceremonial meeting.

"Really, really," said Madame Daville, although she did not in fact see where the difference and the greatness lay in all this, since in her own heart of hearts she would have preferred the bridegroom to wait for the bride at the place appointed and not to upset the arrangements.

"Oh, it was magnificent, simply magnificent," cried Anna Maria, throwing off her fine cashmere shawl. The vehemence of her enthusiasm had made her hot. even though she had only a thin dress, a rose-coloured *belle assemblée*, too light for the time of year.

Madame Daville would have liked, if only out of politeness, not to have been behind Frau von Mitterer and to have said something graceful and friendly. But the proceedings and habits of sovereigns and great personages were to her alien and remote things, of which she had no real idea and on which she could not utter a word, even if she had been willing to resort to falsehood and pretence. Still, in order to say something, she told Anna Maria of her plans in connection with a new and particularly full-flowering variety of hyacinth and explained with enthusiasm



how the four beds of varicoloured hyacinths would look, which were to be spread out in the very centre of the great garden. She showed her the boxes in which the brown, rough, commonplace-looking bulbs of these future hyacinths lay, sorted according to the colour of their flowers.

In a separate box were the bulbs of a particularly fine variety of white hyacinth, which had been brought by the courier from France and of which Madame Daville was particularly proud. A band of these hyacinths was to go diagonally across all four beds, tying them together like a white ribbon. No one in Travnik had ever yet possessed such a fine variety, for scent, colour and size. She related the difficulties she had had in going to this degree of expense and added, finally, that, taken all in all, it was not really so dear.

"Oh, oh," cried Anna Maria, whose wedding mood was still upon her, "oh, that's magnificent! They will be the Emperor's hyacinths in this savage country. Oh my dear Madame, let us christen this variety of hyacinth and call it "Wedding Joy" or "Emperor's Bride" or . . ."

Bewitched by her own words, Anna Maria racked her brain for new names, and Madame Daville agreed in advance with them all, just as if she were talking to a child whom it was better not to contradict, in order to prevent the conversation dragging on.

After this the dialogue was bound to flag, since, when two people converse, their words catch fire and blaze up from their contact with one another but the words of these two came despite each other, each speaking only on her own. It could not have been otherwise. Anna Maria was excited by what was remote, strange and outside herself, Madame Daville only by what was close to her and had an intimate relation to herself and her family.

In the end — and this was the conclusion of every conversation with Madame Daville — the children came in to greet the guest and say good morning. Both the boys came, while the little girl, who was only two months old, slept, replete and warmly wrapped, in her cradle draped with white tulle.

The slight, pale-faced Pierre, who was now in his eighth year, in a dark blue velvet suit with a white lace collar, was a good-looking boy, as demure as an acolyte. He led in his younger brother Jean-Paul, a stout, healthy child with fair curls and rosy cheeks.

Anna Maria did not like children, just as Madame Daville could not conceive of anyone being indifferent to them. Time passed in the company of children Anna Maria counted as lost. In their presence she was afflicted with a feeling of emptiness and boredom. Their tender, childish bodies, still in process of growing, repelled her as something green and unripe and roused in her a feeling of physical discomfort and incomprehensible fear. She was ashamed of this feeling (she herself did not know why) and hid it under the sugared words and lively exclamations which she always used in dealing with children. But within herself, deep within herself, she shrank from children and was rather afraid of these little people who look at us with their great, unsullied eyes, piercingly and questioningly, and judge us with cool severity — or so at least it seems. She always lowered her own eyes before a child's long scrutiny, a thing which she never did before the gaze of grown-ups, probably because those who have grown up are so often either corruptible judges or willing accomplices in our weaknesses and vices.

And now Anna Maria had the same feeling of oppression and uneasiness in the presence of the Daville children but in default of genuine delight in these small persons she kissed them ardently and drew the requisite enthusiasm from her unlimited supplies of ecstasy over the Imperial wedding.

When at last she said goodbye, Anna Maria passed at the pace of a bridal march between the freshly dug beds, while Madame Daville and her astonished children watched her from the doorway. At the garden gate she turned again and called out with a wave of the hand that now they must see each other often, so as to have further talk about the marvellous, marvellous and great things that were happening.

This tremendous enthusiasm of Frau von Mitterer's did not seem to the Colonel to be in accordance with the instructions he had received; even so both he and his whole household were happy that Anna Maria had found a harmless, distant and permanent object for her transports. For a whole year Travnik and the trivial, painful life of a Consul there did not exist for Anna Maria. She even forgot the transfer problem and lived entirely in an atmosphere compounded of the conjugal bliss of Emperors,

general pacification and the mystical union of all the opposites in the world. Her conversation, her behaviour and her music were regulated accordingly. She knew the names of all the new French Empress's ladies-in-waiting, the value, shape and quality of all the wedding presents, and Marie Louise's manner of life and disposition of her time. She followed with deep sympathy the fate of the divorced ex-Empress Josephine, and in this way her need for tears also found a remote and deserving object, which spared the Colonel many an uncomfortable hour.

In the French Consulate as well, life flowed on this year without change or excitement. Towards the end of the summer Daville sent his eldest son to school in France. Davna's son was also accepted as a State scholar, on Daville's recommendation, and sent off to Paris. Davna was beside himself with joy and pride, but being as sombre and smouldering as a half-burnt lump of coal, he was incapable of rejoicing audibly and visibly like other people. He merely trembled all over as he thanked Daville, assuring him that he was ready at any moment to lay down his life for the Consulate. Such was his love for his son and his desire to assure him of a fairer, better, and worthier life than his own.

In another sense too, this year might have been called a happy one, since it went uneventfully, peacefully and insensibly by.

There was peace in Dalmatia, and no trouble on the frontiers. Nothing in particular happened at the Residency. The Consuls saw each other on days of celebration just as before, without cordiality or intimate contact and on working days they followed each other watchfully, though without hatred or excessive zeal. The common people of all religions slowly became used to the Consulates and when they saw that all the difficulties and unpleasantnesses which the Consuls had undergone so far had not driven them from Travnik, they began to calm down and collaborate and to take into account in all their dealings and as part of their routine.

So the life of the town and the Consulates rolled on, from summer to autumn and from winter to spring, without incident and without other changes than those brought about naturally by daily existence and by the passing of the seasons.

But the annals of happy and peaceful years are brief.

The same courier who, in April 1811, brought to Travnik the newspapers with the news that a son had been born to Napoleon who was to bear the title King of Rome, also handed to von Mitterer the order transferring him from Travnik and placing him at the disposal of the Ministry of War. This, then, was the salvation for which the Colonel and his family had been waiting for years; and now it had come, it seemed a very simple, self-evident matter, and, like all salvations, it came both too late and too soon — too late because it could neither change nor mitigate everything they had been through while waiting for release; too soon because, like all changes, it raised a whole series of questions (moving, money, future postings), to which no previous thought had been given.

Anna Maria, who during these last months had been marvelously settled and subdued, burst into tears, since, like all people of her sort, she cried equally from pain or from relief, from desire and from its fulfilment. There was even a stormy scene with the Colonel in which she hurled at him all the reproaches which, if he had been desirous or capable of doing so, he might have made to her; it gave her, however, sufficient strength and moral support to begin packing.

A few days later the new Consul-General, Lieutenant-Colonel von Paulich, who had hitherto commanded a frontier regiment at Kostajnica, arrived to take over from von Mitterer.

The entry of the new Austrian Consul, on a sunny April day, was extremely brilliant and dignified, although the Vizier did not send a particularly large number of people to meet him. The sturdy and young-looking von Paulich, who was well mounted, drew all eyes and aroused curiosity and a secret admiration even in those who would never have admitted to them. Those who had seen him told those who happened not to have been in the bazaar or at a window what a fine, handsome fellow the new Austrian Consul was ("in spite of his being a Christian"). And when, two days later, the new Consul went in solemn procession, accompanied by von Mitterer, to his first audience with the Vizier, an unexpected miracle occurred. People actually watched the procession, sought out the new Consul and stared long and

silently after him. The Moslem women looked from behind their lattices, the children peered over fences and walls and no one uttered a single shout or a single disparaging word. The Moslem shopkeepers, it is true, remained as motionless and sullen as ever.

Such was the passage of the new Consul's procession, and its return from the Residency was the same.

Von Mitterer who earlier on had described to von Paulich how he and his French colleague had been received some years back on their first passage through Travnik, was disappointed at this change and in a fit of ill humour which much resembled envy he retailed to the new Consul every detail of the insults which had been addressed to him in his time. He told him all this with pained reproach in his voice, as if he, von Mitterer, had by his sufferings trodden out this easy, pleasurable road for his successor.

The new Consul-General, however, was the kind of man before whom all paths appeared to smooth themselves out. Von Paulich came of a wealthy Germanized family from Zagreb. His mother had been a German from Styria, from the great von Niedermayer family. He was a man of thirty-five and remarkably handsome. He was strongly built, with a fine skin, a small brown moustache overshadowing his mouth, large dark eyes, with a dark blue pupil shining out of a deep socket, and thick hair with a natural curl, cropped and combed in military style. The whole man gave a striking impression of something monastically clean, cold and composed but without any of those traces of inner conflict and heartsearching which so often leave a painful imprint on the looks and bearing of young monks. The whole of this exceptionally handsome person lived and moved, as it were, within a sort of icy armour behind which every sign of individual life or human weaknesses or needs was lost. His conversation was just the same — sober, amiable and completely impersonal: so were his deep voice and the smile with which his white, regular teeth from time to time lit up his impassive face like a chilly moonshine.

This unruffled person had once been a rich man's prodigy child, a marvel for his memory and his precocity, then one of those exceptional schoolboys who turn up once a decade, to whom school presents no problems at all and who take two removes at

once. The Jesuit fathers, from whom this remarkable boy was receiving his education, had already conceived the idea that in him their Order might acquire one of those perfectly developed personalities who stand like corner-stones in the Jesuit edifice. When he was fourteen, however, the boy had suddenly turned his back on the Order and frustrated the hopes of the Jesuit fathers, and had shown an unexpected inclination for a military career. In this he was abetted by his parents, especially his mother, in whose family there was a strong military tradition. And so, from being a lad who amazed his classics teachers with the quickness of his intelligence and the extent of his knowledge, he became a slim and efficient cadet for whom a great future was prophesied, then a young officer who neither drank nor smoked and had no affairs with women and no quarrels with his superiors, no duels and no debts. His company was the best kept and the best equipped, he was first in his examinations and at drill, all without any of that jealousy which follows ambitious men in their rise like an unpleasant shadow.

After having passed out first in all his examinations and completed all his courses, von Paulich had, once again against all the expectations of his seniors, devoted himself to frontier service, which was usually the dumping-ground of officers of inferior knowledge and more slender means. He had learnt Turkish, had got to know the service on the spot, their methods of work, the men and the conditions; and when von Mitterer's reiterated pleadings at last drew the attention of the higher authorities to him, von Paulich was luckily to hand as the '*familienloses Individuum*' (Man without a family) for whom the Colonel had appealed so pitcously from Travnik.

So now the exhausted von Mitterer, dismayed by the manifold demands of life, was able to take stock of this young man and his extraordinary methods of work. Under his gaze and under his hand all tasks became crystal clear and fell into position easily and naturally in time and space, so that there could be no question of overexcitement or confusion, or of haste or delay. Everything arrived at its fulfilment quite naturally and without a hitch, like a sum with no remainder. The man himself was somewhere high above and outside it all, impenetrable and inaccessible, and merely figured in the business as a mind and a force

which analyzed it, gave orders and made decisions. He was a complete stranger to all those perplexities and irresistible weaknesses, those sentiments and personal peculiarities, all the cloudings of emotion which dog men and their labours, placing themselves across our path, exciting, bewildering and hampering us and often giving our work a direction we never intended. He suffered from none of these impediments, or so at least it seemed to von Mitterer, to whom it appeared that this man worked like some spirit from a higher sphere or like unfeeling Nature herself.

Moving house lays bare a man's life down to its most intimate details. Von Mitterer had the opportunity to consider his own move (to which he would much have preferred not to give a thought if only Frau von Mitterer had permitted), and to compare it with that of this remarkable man. With him everything went properly and smoothly, just as it did in his work. There was no disarray in his baggage, no confusion among his servants. Things found their places of themselves; everything was practical, simple, clearly marked according to its number and use. The servants communicated simply by glances, without speaking or shouting or any orders given aloud. There was no hesitation over anything, nor the least shadow of ill-temper, indecisiveness or disorder.

Always, in everything, a faultless sum with no remainder.

The Lieutenant-Colonel was exactly the same in his receipt of the inventory and in his discussion of the work and staff of the Consulate-General. While speaking of Rotta as his chief assistant, von Mitterer involuntarily lowered his eyes and his voice became uncertain. Dwelling on his words, he said that the interpreter was a little — well — eccentric and was not perhaps the most . . . the choicest flower in the garden, but he was useful and devoted. During the whole of this speech von Paulich looked a little to one side, a trifle aslant. His big eyes narrowed and a cold, ugly gleam appeared in their outer edges. He received all von Mitterer's explanations silently and coldly, with no sign of approval or dissent, obviously reserving to himself, in connection with the object of their talk as well as with the rest of the inventory he was taking over, the right to make his own decisions according to his own findings and his own reckoning, in which no errors or remainders would be allowed.

von Mitterer's departure but at the thought of his own lot and at the memory which the other's going called up in him. The man's departure appeared to him, in itself, as a certain relief, not because it rid him of a dangerous adversary, since judging from everything he heard, the new Consul was a stronger and more intelligent man than von Mitterer, but because this yellow-faced, weary-eyed Colonel with the melancholy look had with time become a kind of personification of their common, unconfessed misery in these wild surroundings. Whatever might come after him, Daville was more content to have parted and said farewell to him than to have met and welcomed him.

At the first halt which took place about noon, by the river-side, von Paulich took leave of his predecessor. Anna Maria punished him by giving him no chance to bid her a further farewell. Leaving the empty carriage to mount the hill, she went on foot along the green verge of the highroad, without deigning to turn towards the valley where, beside the water, the two Consuls were saying goodbye. That tearful sadness which comes over even more normal women on leaving a place where they have spent several years of their life, whether good years or bad, now choked Anna Maria in her turn. Her tears, which she restrained with difficulty, tightened in her throat and distorted her lips. But more than this, she was tormented by the thought of the cold, handsome Lieutenant-Colonel whom she now no longer called "Antinous" but "The Glacier", since he had struck her as even chillier than the marble statue of the handsome youth of antiquity. (She had invented the name for him the previous night and by doing so had satisfied her need to find a special name for everyone she met, with particular reference to her momentary passion for this particular person.) Stiffly and solemnly Anna Maria climbed the mountain road as if she were scaling some solemn, tragic height.

Beside her, on the other, inner verge of the highway walked her daughter Agatha, silent and scared. Unlike her temperamental mother, the girl had no sensation of making some magnificent ascent, but rather one of going sadly downhill. She too was choking with suppressed tears but for quite other reasons. She was the only one who sincerely regretted leaving Travnik, quitting the silence and the freedom of the garden and the veranda



and going off to huge, unfriendly Vienna where there was no peace, no sky and no view, where houses, from the moment you entered their gates, had a heavy, sweet smell which oppressed her heart, and where this mother of hers, who made her feel ashamed in her sleep, would be before her eyes every moment of the day.

Anna Maria, however, had no notion that her daughter's eyes were also full of tears. She had forgotten her very existence and was only muttering broken words of anger, in her fury at her husband's tarrying so long, "bowing and scraping to that Glacier, that inhuman wretch", instead of coldly turning his back on him as she had done. As she muttered, she felt the wind lifting the long, light, green veil which was tied to the back of her travelling hat, she felt it stretching and fluttering. It seemed to her noble and touching, it suddenly altered and raised her whole mood, it raised her in her own eyes until all the petty particulars of her present life vanished and she saw herself as an exalted victim treading the path of renunciation before the wondering eyes of the world.

That was all this unfeeling, arctic man would get from her! No more than her dim silhouette against the skyline and the last proud, imperious wave of her veil as it relentlessly vanished and was gone!

With these thoughts she climbed the verge of the hill and strode along as if she were treading some great, deep stage.

Below, in the valley, her husband was the only one to notice the green veil on the hill. He threw it a preoccupied glance, while The Glacier, noticing nothing in the wide world, took leave of him in the finest and politest manner.

Nevertheless, the sensitive and emotional Anna Maria was not the only one whom the personality of the new Consul had attracted and repelled. Already on the occasion of the first visit von Paulich had paid him, in company with von Mitterer, Daville had seen that he had to do with a completely different type of man from the latter. Von Paulich had spoken his mind more clearly and freely about Consular business. It was possible, too, to hold a conversation with him on most other subjects as well, and especially on the subject of classical literature.

In the course of the further visits which the two of them exchanged, Daville had been able to see the range and depth of the Colonel's knowledge of texts and commentaries. Von Paulich had looked through Daville's translations of Virgil in French, which Daville had lent him, and had expounded his opinion clearly and weightily; he had shown that only a translation in the original metre could be called a correct translation and he had condemned Daville's use, and misuse, of rhyme. Daville had defended his adored Delille, happy that he had someone to talk to about him.

But Daville's first satisfaction at the arrival of this cultivated and well-read gentleman quickly ebbed away. It did not take him long to see that a conversation with this learned Colonel left behind it none of the satisfaction which an exchange of ideas with a partner of refined intelligence on a favourite subject generally leaves. A conversation with the Colonel was, in fact, an exchange of facts — which were invariably accurate, interesting and abundant — on each and every subject; it was not an exchange of ideas or impressions. Everything about such a conversation was impersonal, cool and general. After a talk of this kind the Colonel went off with his rich and precious collection of facts, as handsome, spotless, cold and erect as he had come, and Daville was left just as lonely and as longing for a good talk as he had been before. A talk with the Colonel left no impression behind it on the senses or the soul: it was impossible even to remember the colour of the man's voice. He conducted every conversation in such a way that his partner could neither find out anything about him nor say anything about himself. In general, everything that was intimate, confidential and personal rebounded from the Colonel as if he were a wall. So Daville had to abandon all hope of a possible talk with this cold-blooded lover of literature about his own poetical work.

On the occasion of the happy event at the French Court, Daville had written a commemorative poem for the christening of the King of Rome and had sent it to his Ministry with a request that it be forwarded to its sovereign destination. The poem began with the words:

Salut, fils du printemps et du dieu de la Guerre!  
(Hail, son of spring and of the god of War!)

It had expressed hopes for the peace and welfare of all the nations of Europe and it included a mention of the humble partners in this work in these "wild and mournful regions".

On one of von Paulich's visits Daville read his poem to him, but without any effect. The Colonel not only showed no desire to understand the allusion to their joint work in Bosnia; he said not a word about the poem or its subject. Worst of all, he still remained the same polite and affable person he had always shown himself in all respects. So Daville was inwardly disappointed and antagonized but had no possibility of showing that he had taken offence.

## 20

The period following the Peace of Vienna — the years 1810 and 1811 — which we have called the peaceful years, was in reality a period of strenuous work for Daville. There were no wars, no visible crises or open conflicts, but the whole Consulate was none the less busy with commercial affairs, the collection of facts, the writing of reports and the issuing of certificates of origin and of recommendations to the French authorities at Split or the customs office at Kostajnica. "Trade had struck out across Bosnia", as the local saying had it, or as Napoleon himself said somewhere: "The season of diplomacy is past; and now the consular season is beginning."

Already, three years before, Daville had made suggestions for the development of trade between Turkey and France and the lands under French occupation. He had strongly advised that France should organize her own regular postal service across Turkish territory and should not rely on the Austrian post and on Turkish disorderliness and caprice. All these suggestions had stuck somewhere in the swollen archives in Paris. Now, after the Peace of Vienna, it was obvious that it was of the highest importance, even to Napoleon himself, to act on them, and that quickly, on a far larger scale and in a much broader sense than the Consul at Travnik had ever ventured to propose.

Napoleon's Continental System demanded great changes in the network of road communications and trade channels on

the European continent. The newly-created Illyrian Provinces, with their centre at Ljubljana, were intended in Napoleon's conception to serve this purpose exclusively. Owing to the English blockade the old routes through the Mediterranean, by which France had habitually obtained raw materials, particularly cotton, from the Levant, had become difficult and dangerous. It was now necessary to redirect trade by the mainland route and the newly established Illyria was intended to serve as a link between the Turkish lands and France. Two routes had existed — the Danube route from Constantinople to Vienna and the overland route from Salonica through Bosnia to Trieste, and trade between the territories of Austria and the Levant had long made use of them. They had now to be extended and improved to meet the needs of Napoleonic France.

As soon as it became evident from the first circulars and newspaper articles which way Napoleon's mind was tending, a general competition ensued among all French authorities and institutions as to which should serve the Emperor's will with the greatest zeal and effect. A copious correspondence and brisk co-operation followed between Paris, the Governor-General and Intendant-General at Ljubljana, the Embassy at Constantinople, Marshal Marmont in Dalmatia and the French Consulates in the Levant. Daville worked with zest, referring proudly to his reports of three years ago which showed how close, even at that early date, his line of thought and his outlook had in fact been to the Emperor's ideas.

Now, in the summer of 1811, this work had long been under weigh. For the past year Daville had been making great efforts to find reliable men and assure the supply of horses in all the places through which French goods passed and to organize some control at least over carriers and freights. It had all been difficult, slow and imperfect, like everything in this country, but already it looked as if things were going better and were beginning to work freely and cheerfully, "with Napoleon's breath filling the sails".

To crown all, Daville was expecting one of the biggest merchant houses of Marseilles, Freycinet Brothers, which had previously used the sea route for the carriage of goods from the Levant, to open an office at Sarajevo. The office was approved

by the French Government and instructed to work with the Consul. One of the Freycinet brothers, a young man, had arrived a month ago at Sarajevo to direct the business personally; and now he had come for a day or two to Travnik to pay a visit to the Consul-General and to discuss the work which had still to be done.

The short, fine Travnik summer was in full swing. A dazzling, clear day, all sunshine and blue sky, was quivering over the Travnik valley. The table had been laid on the big terrace, in the shadow of the Consulate building, and round it a set of white wicker chairs. Coolness breathed from the shade but something could still be felt of the sweltering heat which lay heavy on the clustered houses down in the bazaar. The steep green sides of the narrow valley gave out a dry heat and seemed to pant and heave like the flanks of a lizard lying in the sun. On the terrace Madame Daville's hyacinths had long faded, both the white and the coloured, the double and the single; instead the beds along the borders were blooming with red geraniums or frail, blue gentians.

Daville and young Freycinet sat at the table in the shade. Before them were spread copies of their reports, numbers of the "*Moniteur*" with the texts of decrees and orders and writing materials.

Jacques Freycinet was a sturdy young man, with red and white cheeks, and with that calm assurance of voice and gesture common to children of well-to-do families. Business was obviously in his blood. None of his family had ever done or wished to do any other form of work or to belong to any other class, and he was in no way different from the rest. Like all his forbears from the beginning, he was neat, polite, sober, cautious, firm in the defence of his own rights, concentrated on business, but not blindly or slavishly.

Freycinet had covered the road from Sarajevo to Kostajnica both ways; at Sarajevo he had rented a whole depot and had already begun to discuss business with the merchants and carriers and with the authorities. He had now come to exchange facts with Daville, to impart his own observations and to make proposals. The Consul was glad to have acquired this polite and lively southerner as a colleague in a task which had so often seemed to him insuperable.

"Once again," said Freycinet, with that certitude with which business men assert facts which are to their advantage, "Once again, then, I repeat, you must allow a week from Sarajevo to Kostajnica, with eight caravan stages: Kiseljak, Busovača, Karaula, Jajce, Zmijanje, Novi Han, Prijedor and, finally, Kostajnica. In winter you must allow twice the time, that is to say, fourteen stages. We shall have to establish at least two staging-posts on this route, if we want to safeguard goods against bad weather and theft. The price of transport has gone up by leaps and bounds and still goes on rising. It is being raised by Austrian competition and also, I fancy, by certain Sarajevo merchants, Serbs and Jews, who are working to English directives. Today one must reckon with the following costs: from Salonica to Sarajevo one-hundred-and-fifty-five piastres a load; from Sarajevo to Kostajnica fifty-five piastres. Two years ago these costs were exactly fifty per cent lower. Now everything must be done to prevent a further rise, since that might lay the whole route open to question. To that one must add the arbitrariness and cupidity of the Turkish officials, the predilection of the local inhabitants for thieving and pilfering, the dangers of an extension of the Serb revolt and of banditry in the Albanian districts, and lastly, the danger of plague."

Daville, who was always on the look-out for the hand of the English Intelligence Service, wanted to know the grounds for Freycinet's conclusion that the Sarajevo merchants were working in the English interest, but the young man was not to be put out or turned from his course. Holding his notes in front of him, he went on:

"To resume, then, and to conclude. The dangers which threaten our communications are: the rising in Serbia, Albanian bandits, theft in Bosnia, the sharp rise in transport rates, the difficulty in forecasting taxes and duties, competition and, lastly, the plague and other infectious diseases. The measures which need taking are: first, the establishment of two staging-posts between Sarajevo and Kostajnica; secondly, some check on the uncontrolled fluctuations of Turkish currency and the fixture by special decree of an exchange rate of 5.50 piastres to a thaler of 6 francs or one Maria-Teresa thaler, 11.50 piastres to a Venetian zecchino, and so on; thirdly, the enlargement of the quarantine

station at Kostajnica, the building of a bridge to replace the ferry, the fitting out of warehouses to hold at least eight thousand bales of cotton, the equipment of post-houses for travellers, and so on; fourthly, the presentation of special gifts to the Vizier, Suleiman Pasha and a few more Turks of high rank, but in connection with our special requirements. The whole plan should cost between about ten and thirteen thousand francs. In this way I think it might be possible to make this route safe and get over the main difficulties."

Daville noted all these facts, with a view to including them in his official report. At the same time he prepared with some satisfaction to read the young man his own report of 1807 in which he had so clearly foreseen Napoleon's intentions and all the measures which were now being put in hand.

"Ah, my dear sir, I could tell you a lot about the difficulties which threaten every intelligent scheme in this country and every useful and sensible enterprise. There is a great deal I could tell you, but you will see for yourself what this country and its people and its government are like, and what great difficulties have to be met at every step."

But the young man had nothing more to say, having enumerated very accurately both the difficulties and the ways of meeting them. He clearly had no inclination for complaints of a general nature or for "psychological phenomena". He agreed out of politeness to listen to Daville's report of 1807, which the Consul began to read.

The shadow in which they were sitting grew longer and longer. Before them lemonade stood in tall crystal glasses, growing steadily more tepid, since both men forgot about it over their work.

In that same summer silence, two blocks higher than the Consulate where Daville and Freycinet were working, only a little to the left and nearer the stream which tumbled, parched and invisible, into the valley, Musa the son of Musa Krdjalija sat with his friends in a garden.

In this steeply-sloping, neglected enclosure everything was smothered in overgrown vegetation. On a plot of level ground, under a great pear-tree, a low table was spread, with the remains of a meal on it, and cups and a flagon of iced brandy. Here the sun had already gone, but the opposite bank of the Lašva was

still in the sunlight. Musa the Singer and Hamza the Crier lay in the grass. With his back propped against the hillside and his feet resting on the pear-tree, Murat Hodjić, know as the Staggering Hodja, half sat and half lay. Against the tree lay his little tambourine with a brandy glass balanced on top of it.

He was a swarthy little man, as small and fiery as a cockerel. In his peaky, yellow face shone great dark eyes with a fixed stare and a fanatical gleam in them. He too was from one of the better Travnik families and had once been a student at the school but brandy had never allowed him to finish or to become an *imam* in Travnik, as so many of his family had been. When he was due to pass his last examination, the story goes, he had appeared before the Muderiz and the board of examiners so drunk that he could hardly keep on his feet and swayed and reeled as he walked. The Muderiz had then turned him away from the examination and called him the Staggering Hodja. The name had stuck. In his humiliation the head-strong, sensitive young man had thereafter given himself up entirely to drink, and the more he drank the greater his wounded vanity and bitterness grew within him. An outcast from the ranks of his contemporaries, from the very beginning he dreamed of one day surpassing them all by some prodigious feat and thus revenging himself on the world for everything. Like many unsuccessful men who are small in stature but fiery in spirit, he was consumed with a frantic secret desire not to continue to his life's end insignificant, unrespected and unknown, but to astound the world, he himself knew not how, where or with what. In time this idea, inflamed by heavy drinking to the pitch of insanity, completely dominated him. The lower he fell, the more he fed himself with lies and fooled himself with big words, reckless tales and vain imaginings. Among his companions, drunkards like himself, this often made him a jest and a mockery.

During these fine summer days the three of them always started drinking, as they were now, in Musa's garden and at nightfall went out into the town for further drinking. While waiting for darkness to come with its great stars in the narrow blue strip of the Travnik sky and while waiting for the drink to take full effect, they sang or chatted quietly and heavily, rather disjointedly and without any regard for the other parties to the



conversation. Their talk and their singing were those of men sodden with drink; they were a substitute for work and movement, to both of which these men had become unused. In these conversations they travelled, they underwent notable experiences, they realized longings which could never be satisfied in any other way, they gazed on the unseen and listened to the unheard, they swelled and grew and took delight in their own greatness, they arose and flew like winged creatures, they became all they never would be and never could be, they possessed what is never attainable anywhere and what only brandy can, for an instant, bestow on those who surrender themselves entirely to it.

Musa talked the least. He lay, completely sunk in the thick, dark green grass. His hands were clasped under his head, his left leg was bent at the knee and his right was thrown across it, like that of a man sitting down. His gaze was lost in the shining sky. Through the interwoven grassblades he touched with his fingers the soft soil which, it seemed to him, was breathing in long, even breaths. At the same time he felt the warm air streaming up his sleeves and up the unbuttoned legs of his baggy trousers. It was a hardly perceptible stir in the air, a special Travnik breeze which comes in the early summer evenings and creeps slowly and at a low level, skimming the ground, skimming through the grass and the shrubs. Musa, who was somewhere halfway between the morning's hangover and a new state of intoxication which was just coming on, gave himself up entirely to the warmth of the earth and to this gentle, steady current of air and it was as though they lifted him up so that he floated and flew, and that not because they were strong and powerful but because he himself was no more than a breath and a quiver of heat, so light and frail that he was carried with them hither and thither.

While he was floating and flying in this way and lying all the while just where he was, it seemed to him that through his drowsiness he heard the talk of his two companions. Hamza's voice was hoarse and difficult to catch, but the Staggering Hodja's was deep and distinct: he was speaking slowly and solemnly, with his eyes fixed on one spot, as if he were reading.

Three days before, the three of them had come to the conclusion that they had run out of money and must at all costs

come by some more. It had long been the Staggering Hodja's turn to find money but he had always had great difficulty in doing so and preferred to drink at the expense of others.

The talk was of the loan which the Staggering Hodja was to secure from his uncle at Podlugovo who had lately become a rich man.

"Where does his money come from?" asked Hamza irritably and suspiciously, as one who knew this uncle and knew that money is not a thing easily come by.

"He has been working in the cotton business all this summer."

"As a carrier for the French?"

"No, he's been buying and reselling cotton 'found' in the villages."

"But does the racket work?" asked Hamza slowly.

"They say it does, it's a bloody marvel. The English, you know, closed the sea route and Bonaparte was short of cotton, but an army of that size has to be clothed. So now it's a case of sending the cotton through Bosnia. From Novi Pazar to Kostajnica it's nothing but horses after horses and bale upon bale, nothing but cotton. The roads are chock-a-block and the depots are crammed. You can't get a carrier anywhere: the French have bought up the lot and they pay in good sound ducats. If anyone has a horse these days, it's worth good gold to him and anyone who works for the cotton business is rich in a month."

"Fine, but how do they get the cotton?"

"Eh, how? It's grand. The French won't sell cotton for love or money. If you offered them a house for an oke of cotton, they wouldn't sell. Well, the local people have thought out a way of pinching it. They steal the stuff in the depots where the carriers spend the night and unload their horses. When they unload, everything is as per schedule; when they begin loading next morning, there's one bale missing. Then there's a to-do. Who was it? Where is it? But the whole caravan can't wait for the sake of one bale: so they go without it. They pinch still more in the villages. The village children go out and hide themselves in the oak-trees along the road and from there they make a slit in one of the bundles. As the road is narrow and overgrown with oak, the cotton begins to fall out and catch in the twigs on both sides

of the highway. As soon as the caravan has gone by, the children come out and collect the cotton in baskets, then hide again and wait for another caravan. The French quarrel with the carriers and give them the sack. In some places the police go out and catch the children. But who's to get better of a whole people? They go on plucking at Bonaparte's cotton and gather it off the trees, just as if they were in Egypt, and people come from the market-towns and buy it up. Many a man's got himself warmth and wealth that way!"

"And is it just on the way through Bosnia that this is happening?" said Hamza drowsily.

"Not only on the way through Bosnia but all over Turkey. Bonaparte has squeezed decrees out of Stamboul and sent Consuls and merchants with money all over the country, but, well, there you are. Do you know, that for Bonaparte's cotton my uncle . . ."

"You get the money," Musa broke in quietly and contemptuously, "and we'll not ask whether it comes from your father's or your mother's side, or where the cotton or the knives grow. It's money we want."

Musa did not like these tales of the Hodja's: they were always long and overdone and were always meant to show the Hodja's wisdom, dash and knowledge of the world and affairs. Hamza was more patient and listened to them with the unruffled good humour which never left him even during the worst shortage of cash.

"God knows we want it," said Hamza in a kind of hoarse echo, "and we want it quickly."

"And I'll get it, so help me, straightaway or die in the attempt," said the Hodja solemnly.

Nobody made any reply to his oaths and promises.

There was silence. The three bodies, weak with idleness, and either constantly inflamed with alcohol or constantly tortured by a craving for it, breathed deeply and seemed at peace, stretched on the grass in the warm shade.

"He's a mighty man, this Bonaparte," the Hodja broke out again, spinning out his words as if he were thinking aloud, "a mighty man: there's nothing on earth he doesn't conquer and overcome. Yet they say he's a little, frail sort of man: you can hardly see him."

"A little chap, about your size, but he has a stout heart," said Hamza, yawning.

"And they say," the Hodja went on, "that he never has a sword or a gun on him. He just turns up his collar and pulls his hat over his eyes and attacks at the head of his army. He mows down every living thing. Fire darts from his eyes: there's never a sword can cut him and never a bullet can hit him."

The Hodja took his glass off the tambourine, poured out and drank, all with his left hand, while keeping his right inside his open shirt-front. He sank his head on his chest and never took his distant gaze off the rough pear-tree bark. Suddenly the brandy began to sing in him. Scarcely parting his lips, without altering his position or shifting his eyes, he gave vent to his deep baritone:

"Lovely Naza has fallen sick,  
Her mother's only daughter."

And again he took his glass, poured out, drank it off and returned the glass to the tambourine.

"Ah, if we could only meet him . . ."

"Meet whom?" asked Hamza, although this was the hundredth time he had listened to this and similar tales.

"Why, him, Bonaparte! If only the two of us could come to grips, damn his infidel soul, and let the best man win."

The frantic words died away in the utter silence. The Hodja took his glass off the tambourine again, belched loudly with the drink and went on in a deeper voice:

"If he gets the better of me, let him take my head. I don't grudge him even that. But if I beat him and bind him, I wouldn't do anything to him, I'd just drive him in irons through the Turkish army and make him pay tribute to the Sultan, just the same as the lowest infidel shepherd from below Karaula."

"Bonaparte's a long way off, Murad, a long way off", said Hamza good-humouredly, "and he has a mighty power and a big army. And what about all the other infidel empires you'd have to pass through, my poor fellow?"

"Oh, the others wouldn't be any trouble," retorted the Hodja loftily. "He may be far away when he's in his own country, but

he goes all over the world, he never stays still anywhere. Last year he went to Vienna and got married: he took the German Emperor's daughter."

"Eh, while he's here around Vienna you might manage something" said Hamza, smiling. "You'd better get busy while there's time."

"Well, I'm always telling you. We really must pull ourselves together one day and get about the world, instead of moping and rotting away in this Travnik dump. Make your name before you die. I've said it time and again, but with you two it's always 'No, don't. Wait a bit. We'll do it today, we'll do it tomorrow'. And there you are . . ."

As he said this, the Hodja took his glass off the tambourine with a resolute gesture, poured out and drank it smartly off.

Neither Hamza nor Musa replied further to his maunderings. Unobtrusively and with an economy of movement they too had been drinking brandy from their bowls in the grass. Left to himself, the little Hodja was plunged in that lofty and disdainful silence which always follows hard-fought duels and great feats of valour that never win their due acknowledgement or a fitting reward. With his right hand in his open shirt-front and his chin on his breast, he gazed sullenly before him with a preoccupied expression:

"Three whole years she was ailing."

His mournful baritone suddenly broke forth again as if someone else were singing from inside him.

Hamza drew a deep breath and coughed.

"Here's your health, Murad, my old fighting-cock! You'll go off, Inshallah, if God wills, off you'll go and half the world will see and hear what and who Murad is, and his country and kin."

"Your health, Eshkun," said the Hodja, with suffering emotion, wearily raising his glass like one bowed beneath the weight of his fame.

So the time went by, while Musa lay, silent and unmoving, and floated blissfully on the breeze and the warm earth, freed, at least for a moment, from the law of gravity and the fetters of time.

The dazzling, translucent day, all sunshine and blue sky, quivered over the Travnik valley.

At the beginning of 1812, when signs began to multiply and rumours began to spread of the possibility of a new war, Daville was seized with a slight, hardly perceptible faintness at each of these reports, like a man who sees that he is in for a familiar attack of pain, of a kind which has struck him several times before.

"Dear God, oh dear God!"

He uttered the words indistinctly to himself, in a single, long-drawn breath lying collapsed in his armchair, with the palm of his right hand over his eyes.

It was all beginning all over again, as it had done the year before last at this same season of the year, and as it had done still earlier, in 1805 and 1806: and it would all be just the same. Disquiet and anxiety and doubt about it all, and a feeling of shame and repulsion, and with it a sneaking hope that it might even so somehow end happily this time too — this one more time! — and that life (this inconsequential, miserable, desirable, one and only life!), the life of the Empire and of the community, his own life and that of his family, might somehow prove stable and durable; that this trial might be the last; that there might be an end to all these fluctuations, perpetually rising and falling, like a mad seesaw which left a man only enough breath to say that he was still alive. This time too, it would probably end all right, with victory bulletins, and a favourable peace settlement, but who could stand a life like this, which became morally more and more oppressive and more and more exacting, and who could find it in himself to go on paying the price such a life demanded? What has a man left to give who has already worn himself out with giving? How can his forces continue to function when they are exhausted? And yet every man must give his all and work to his utmost, if only to get once for all out of this eternal fighting, to breathe more freely and snatch a little stability and peace.

"Peace, just peace! Peace, peace!" he thought, or whispered, and the very word lulled him into a doze.

But before his closed eyes, under his cool palm, there suddenly appeared the forgotten face of the forgotten von Mitterer, sallow and unhappy, with the deep furrows and the green shadows in them, the straight waxed moustaches and the black eyes with

their unhealthy glow. It was with that selfsame expression, in this same room, this time last year, that he had said, amiably but ambiguously, that next spring there "would be a spot of trouble" (yes, that was exactly the Army expression he had used). And now here he was, with merciless punctuality, like some soulless pedantic apparition, to point out to him how accurately he had prophesied and that there was no such thing as peace and would not be. The head of von Mitterer said bitterly and maliciously, just as it had done when they parted last year:

*"Il y aura beaucoup de tapage".*

Ugly words in an ugly accent, with an undertone of malice behind it all.

*"... beaucoup de tapage ... de tapage ... de tapage."*

And at those words von Mitterer's face seemed to grow paler and paler and more and more deathlike; but it was no longer von Mitterer. It was that pale, severed, bloody head on a sansculotte pike he had seen from his window in Paris twenty years ago.

Daville jumped up, took his hand suddenly away from his eyes and shook off his drowsiness, and with it the form which had come to frighten him when he was so helpless and fatigued. The big wooden clock was ticking monotonously in the overheated room.

That spring boded ill for Daville.

From the circular instructions, from the growing frequency of the couriers and from what was written in the press it was obvious that great things and fresh campaigns were in preparation and that the whole war machine of the Empire was once again in motion. But there was nobody with whom he could discuss this, no other person to whose ideas he could listen, whose views he could cross-question or to whom he could confide his doubts and fears, so that he might see, in the light of a sensible conversation, how much substance there was in his apprehensions and how much was the product of imagination and fear and weariness. Like all men who are isolated but weak and worn out, and whose self-confidence momentarily wavers, Daville passionately longed to find in the words and looks of others some confirmation and cover for his own thoughts and actions instead of seeking them in himself. But it is one of our curses that there is always someone

to talk to and to give us advice, except when we need them most, and no one will discuss with us clearly and frankly what is really tormenting us.

Von Paulich continued to function, cold, polite, handsome and inexorable, an Imperial Austrian automaton without a flaw or a hesitation. When they saw each other, they talked about Vergil or about the intentions of the European courts, but in these exchanges Daville never managed to confirm any of his presentiments or fears, since von Paulich confined himself to general expressions about "the ties of alliance and kinship which exist between the Austrian and French Courts" or "the wisdom and vision of those who today jointly direct the destinies of the states of Europe", and avoided giving any closer indication of the future by even so much as a glance. Daville himself never ventured to put direct questions to him in case he should give himself away. He merely gazed feverishly into the other's strangely dark blue eyes, in which he always found the same pitilessness and the same impregnable reserve.

It was no use talking to Davna. Nothing existed for him but tangible things and practical questions. Anything which had not yet reached this degree of ripeness was non-existent as far as he was concerned.

There remained his conversations with Ibrahim Pasha and the people at the Residency. What one heard from the Vizier was more or less the same as he had already been repeating for years; till it was now as fossilized as himself.

It was the beginning of April. At this season the Vizier was always restless and irritable, since the time was approaching when he would have to fit out an army for Serbia and in addition, they always made demands on him from Constantinople which far exceeded his capacities.

"They don't know what they're about down there," the Vizier complained to Daville, who was himself anxious to derive from this conversation some further comfort for his own anxieties. "They don't know what they're about, that's all I can say. They tell me to move at the same time as the Pasha of Nish, so that we can attack the rebels on two fronts. But they don't know, and don't want to know, what my resources here are. How can my oxen keep step with his horses? Where am I to find ten thousand



men and how am I to feed and equip them, when you can't bring the Bosnians together without their squabbling as to who is first (and nobody's last, of course). And suppose I manage all this, what good is that when these Bosnian heroes won't fight on the other side of the Drina or the Sava? Their valour and their proverbial heroism stop at the Bosnian frontiers."

It was evident that this time the Vizier was in no mood to think or talk of anything else. He became almost animated, if one can employ the word in connexion with him and he waved his hand as if he were chasing away an importunate fly.

"In any case, Serbia isn't worth all this talk. Ah, if Sultan Selim were alive, everything would be different."

When once the subject of the unhappy Selim III was broached, then, for that day at least, it was useless to expect conversation on any other topic. And so it turned out.

About this time Daville made a special present to the Secretary, Tahir Beg, simply to have a chance of hearing his opinion. Having got through the dreary winter, more in his bed than on his feet, Tahir Beg had now suddenly revived and had become talkative and active, indeed somewhat unnaturally lively. His face was already a little tanned with the April sun and his eyes shone as if he were slightly drunk.

The Secretary talked rapidly and feverishly about Travnik; about the winters they had spent there (it was his fourth and Daville's fifth); about the feelings of friendship and sympathy which their long residence together in this town had engendered in the Vizier and all his staff towards Daville and his family; about Daville's children; about the spring; and about a large number of different things which only appeared to have no connexion with each other but were all in fact closely connected with the mood in which Tahir Beg found himself. Quietly and smilingly but with animation, as if he were saying something which had only just occurred to him that very minute and something which he wanted to put to himself and to Daville, the Secretary said, like one reciting:

"Spring atones and makes amends for everything. So long as the earth goes on flowering, afresh and afresh for ever, and so long as there are people to notice this phenomenon and rejoice in it, all is well." And with a brown and sunburnt hand, the nails

of which were astonishingly ribbed or fluted from top to bottom and were of a bluish colour, the Secretary indicated by a slight gesture how all things evened out.

"And there will always be people to do that, since those who are no longer able, or have not the intelligence, to look at the sun and the flowers are always dying out, and new ones come. As the poet says: 'In children the river of humanity renews and purifies itself'."

Daville assented and smiled himself to see the other's beaming face. He thought to himself: "This man too is saying, God knows for what reason, what he most needs to say at this moment". And he began at once to turn the conversation from spring and childhood to empires and wars. Tahir Beg caught at each of these subjects and talked of each with the same tranquil, smiling animation, as if he were reading something new and rare.

"Yes, we too hear that there are new wars in prospect. Who will be with whom and who against whom we shall see in due course but war seems certain this summer."

"Are you sure?" Daville asked painfully and with constraint.

"Sure, so far as what our newspapers write goes," replied the Secretary with a smile, "and I have no reason to disbelieve them."

Tahir Beg bowed his head a little and gave Daville a flashing glance, slightly out of the corner of his eye, such a glance as one sometimes gets from stoats or martens, quick-darting animals which bite and drink blood but do not eat the flesh of the kill.

"Quite sure," the Secretary continued, "inasmuch as I know that there has been continual war for centuries between the Christian Powers."

"But the non-Christian, Oriental Powers also make war," interrupted Daville.

"They do. The only difference is that Moslem states make war without concealment or contradiction. They have always looked on war as an important part of their mission in the world. Islam entered Europe as a fighting faction and it has maintained itself there to this day either by waging war on its own or thanks to the wars of the Christian Powers among themselves. On the other hand, so far as I know, the Christian Powers condemn

war, at least to the extent of always throwing upon each other the blame for every war which occurs; but while they condemn war, they never cease to wage it."

"There is undoubtedly some truth in your description," Daville said to encourage the Secretary, with the hidden intention of leading him on to talk about the Franco-Russian dispute and hearing his opinion, "but do you really think that the Tsar of Russia wants to draw down upon himself the wrath of the greatest ruler and the most powerful army in Christendom?"

The Secretary's eyes became still brighter and his glance still more indirect.

"My dear sir, the Tsar's intentions are quite unknown to us at this distance, but I may draw your attention to one fact which I have long noted myself, namely that war never ceases over the face of Christian Europe, but it shifts from one end to another as a man might shift a red-hot coal held in the palm of his hand, so that it might burn him less. This time it is somewhere on the European frontiers of Russia."

Daville had already seen that in this quarter too he would get no information on what was obsessing and tormenting him, since the Secretary, like the Vizier, was saying only what his own inner need of the moment compelled him to say. Nevertheless, he wanted to make one more attempt, bluntly and directly.

"It is known that the main object of Russian policy is now the liberation of Russia's coreligionists, and therefore of these regions, from Ottoman rule. Consequently many people consider it more likely that Russia's real war plans are directed against Turkey and not against countries of western Europe."

The Secretary refused to be put out.

"What of it? What happens is not always what seems most likely to happen. And even if things were as 'many people consider' them to be, it's not hard to foresee what the course of events would be, since it's no secret that all of these territories have been won by war, and defended by war, and will be lost by war, if lost they are to be. But that does not make any difference to what I was saying."

And Tahir Beg returned persistently to his theme.

"Look with attention and you will see it to be exactly true that wherever Christian Europe extends its power, with its customs

and institutions, there war follows too, war between Christian and Christian. It is so in Africa, it is so in America, it is so in the European parts of the Ottoman Empire which have fallen under the sway of a Christian state. And if ever it should happen, by the will of Destiny, that we should lose these regions and some Christian country should conquer them, as you were saying just now, it would be just the same here. So it may perhaps come about, a hundred or two hundred years hence, that in this very place where you and I are now talking about the possibility of a war between Turks and Christians, Christians, freed from Ottoman domination, may be fighting and shedding each other's blood."

Tahir Beg laughed aloud at his vision. Daville laughed too out of politeness but also from desire to give everything an agreeable, innocent look, although he was really disappointed and ill-content with the turn which the conversation had taken.

At the conclusion everything was sprinkled and spiced with further reflections by Tahir Beg on spring, on youth — which is eternal, even though the young are not eternal — on friendship and neighbourliness which make even disagreeable countries pleasant and toicerable.

Daville received them with a smile, behind which he endeavoured to hide his dissatisfaction. On the way back from the Residency Daville, as he often did, exchanged a few words with Davna.

"How does Tahir Beg seem to you?" asked Daville, merely in order to show his willingness to converse.

"He's a sick man," said Davna drily and laconically.

Their horses moved on again.

"But he seems to have made a good recovery this time."

"That's just what's wrong with him, he's always on the mend. He may recover in this way over and over again, but one day he'll . . ."

"Do you think so?" said Daville with a start of surprise.

"I do. Did you see his hands and his eyes? He's a man who is dosing himself to death and living on drugs," Davna concluded, sternly and dourly, in a quiet voice.

Daville made no reply. Now his attention had been drawn to it and parts of Tahir Beg's conversation recurred to him without the Secretary's peculiar smile and manner, they did strike him as having been disconnected, unnatural and exaggerated. All that Davna had said, uttered in Davna's rough and brutally dispassionate fashion, grated on Daville in some indefinable way, like something painfully out of joint or some personal physical discomfort. He moved his horse a length ahead of Davna's. It was a sign that the conversation was over. "It's extraordinary," thought Daville, looking at the broad back of the sergeant from the Residency who was riding ahead of them, clearing the way, "it's extraordinary how no one here has any pity or any of that natural compassion which with us springs up spontaneously at the sight of another's suffering. In these countries one has to be a beggar or a cripple, or have had one's house burnt about one, to arouse any pity. Otherwise, between equals or between like and like there is none to be found anywhere. A man might live here a hundred years without ever getting used to this heartlessness in conversation, this kind of moral bleakness and coarse directness, or ever becoming so tough that they ceased to offend or pain him". Above them the voice of the muezzin rang out from the Coloured Mosque, with the sudden force of an explosion. The piercing voice quivered and overflowed with a strong, aggressive, angry devotion which seemed to well up from the muezzin's chest. It was noon. A second muezzin could now also be heard from a mosque somewhere out of sight. His voice, deep and vibrant, followed like a pious, emulous shadow the voice of the crier from the mosque in the bazaar. All the way to the Consulate these voices accompanied them and mingled and faded in the air above Daville and his escort.

Just at that time, on the feast of the Annunciation, there came the anniversary of the christening of Daville's daughter. Daville took advantage of it to invite to lunch von Paulich and the parish priest of Dolac, Fra Ivo Janković, with his assistant. The Brothers accepted the invitation, but it was immediately evident that they had in no way changed their attitude. They were both exaggeratedly polite and looked Daville not in the eyes but somewhere in the shoulder, rather low and slightly

askance. Daville knew this look on Bosnian faces (the long years and many dealings with the Bosnians had taught it to him) and he knew well that there was nothing to be done, by force or flattery, against what lay behind it. He knew the morbid, mysterious inner complexity of these Bosnians who are as sensitive where they themselves are concerned as they are harsh and rough when it is a question of others. He braced himself for this lunch as if for some difficult game which he knew in advance he could not win but which had to be played all the same.

Up till lunch-time and while they were eating the talk ran on general topics, with a sweet and guileless insincerity. Fra Ivo ate and drank so much that his face, which was in any case ruddy, became violet and his tongue was unloosed. The effect of an ample lunch on his young assistant was just the reverse: large quantities of food only made him grow paler and still more silent.

As he puffed out his first smoke-cloud, Fra Ivo laid upon the table the great fist of his right hand, with the sprouts of red hair round the finger-joints, and began without any preface to talk of the relations between the Holy See and Napoleon.

Daville was astonished at the friar's knowledge of the separate phases of the conflict which was in progress between the Pope and the Emperor. He knew all the details of the National Council which Napoleon had summoned in Paris the previous year and of the resistance of the French bishops, just as he knew of all the places in which the Pope had been confined and all the fluctuations of the pressure to which he had been subjected.

The Consul began defending and explaining the proceedings of the French. (His voice sounded weak and unconvincing even to himself.) He tried, moreover, to turn the conversation towards the present international situation, so that he might hear what this friar, and his colleagues and the whole congregation with him, thought about the immediate future and what they expected from it. But the friar had no intention of turning aside to general questions. He knew only what his passionate nature and fanatical faith had taught him: on every other point he cast his eyes towards von Paulich who was talking with Madame Daville a little way away from them. It was clear that the friar had not much use either for the Russians or for the French. In his incisive voice.

which seemed strangely thin and clipped for so large a man, he merely continued to forecast the gloomiest prospects for a nation which treated the Church and its Head in such a way.

"I've no idea, Monsieur le Consul, whether your army will march on Russia or any other country," Fra Ivo replied to Daville's attempts to learn his opinion and to find out on which side his sympathies would lie in such an event, "but I know for certain, and I tell you frankly, that they will find no blessing, whatever country they march against; anyone who deals like that with the Church . . ."

Here followed a fresh series of accusations, with quotations from the last Papal Bull against Napoleon on "the new and for ever deeper wounds which are inflicted daily upon the Apostolic Power, the laws of the Church, the sanctity of the Faith and Ourselves personally."

Seeing him so grim, sullen and implacable, Daville was somehow struck with the thought which did not come to him for the first time today but had been with him constantly for years, that this man was brimful of a wrath and defiance which radiated from him at every word and in that incisive clipping of his words, and that everything he thought and spoke of, even the Pope himself, was no more than a welcome opportunity for this wrath and defiance to break forth from him and find expression.

Close beside the priest his young assistant sat motionless, like a silent miniature reproduction of him, exactly alike in attitude and bearing. He too kept his right hand on the table, with the fist clenched; only his fist was small and white, with the scarcely perceptible beginnings of red hair.

At the other end of the table a lively conversation was in progress between Madame Daville and von Paulich. From the first arrival of the Colonel in Travnik she had been surprised and fascinated by his genuine interest in everything relating to the house and household and by his remarkable knowledge of domestic affairs and requirements. (Just as Daville had been surprised and fascinated by his knowledge of Vergil and Ovid; and just as, in his day, von Mitterer had been surprised and daunted by his knowledge of military questions.) Whenever they met, they quickly found in these matters a subject for endless and agreeable conversation. At the moment they were talking

about furniture and about the preservation and maintenance of things in the special conditions prevailing here. The Colonel's knowledge seemed truly inexhaustible and unlimited. On each of these subjects he spoke as if it were the only one which interested him for the time being and on each he spoke with the same cool, remote impartiality, without the introduction of anything personal or individual. He now began to talk about the effect of damp on various kinds of wood in house fittings and on the seaweed or horsehair in upholstered chairs, with assured knowledge and experience but also with scientific detachment, as if he were treating of furniture in the world at large and not of himself and his private effects.

The Colonel spoke in a slow and bookish but choice French that was agreeably different from the corrupt vocabulary and rapid Levantine utterance which had been so painful in von Mitterer. Madame Daville helped him out, finding the occasional word which escaped him. She was happy to find that this polite, precise gentleman could talk on the subjects which were her chief preoccupation and constituted her real life. In her conversation, as in her work and her prayers, she was always the same, gentle and mild, without hidden intentions or hesitations, full of an assured faith in Heaven and earth and in whatever time might bring and men might be able to do.

Looking and listening to all these people around him, Daville thought: "They are all peaceful and content. They all know, at least for the moment, exactly what they want. I am the only one who is confused and frightened by what is to come, the only one who is tired and unhappy and I am still condemned to hide the fact and bear it about with me, without giving myself away by a single sign."

He was interrupted in these thoughts by Fra Ivo who suddenly got up, as he always did, with a sharp reminder to his assistant, as if he were the cause of their sitting on so long, and exclaimed that it was late, that they had a long way to go home and there was work waiting to be done. This brought a still further touch of cold unfriendliness into this gathering.

That same spring the Metropolitan Kallinik and the suffragan bishop Joannikije came to Travnik on the business of the



Orthodox Church. Daville invited them to lunch in the hope of ascertaining their opinion on the events in prospect.

The Metropolitan was a stout, lymphatic, sickly man with spectacles of thick glass (but of unequal thickness) behind which his eyes looked horribly deformed and shapeless as if they might melt and dissolve at any moment. He had the sugary manner of a Constantinopolitan Greek and spoke in laudatory and peaceable terms of all the Great Powers, and of all alike. In general, he had a few phrases for everything and for every idea, all of them words of praise and approbation, and he adapted them to whatever was said to him, more or less, though without much selectiveness and indeed without paying any great heed to the subject under discussion. This contemptuous and exaggerated politeness, which ill conceals a complete indifference towards anything other people may be saying or anything which might be said, is often to be met with in aged ecclesiastics of all faiths.

Bishop Joannikije was quite a different sort of person, a stout, heavy Orthodox monk, overgrown with black beard, with an angry expression always on his face and something truculent and military in his whole bearing, as if beneath his black cassock he wore armour and heavy equipment. The Turks were extremely suspicious of this bishop on account of his connections with the rising in Serbia but they were unable to prove anything against him.

He answered Daville's questions briefly but sharply and with candour.

"You would like to know whether I am for Russia. I tell you we are for the one who helps us to keep alive, and eventually to free ourselves. You, at least, who live here know how it is with us and what we have to endure. So no one need wonder..."

The Metropolitan turned to the bishop and rebuked him with a look from his expressionless eyes, so much in peril of liquidation behind their thick glasses; but the bishop went on unwaveringly:

"The Christian Powers are fighting among themselves instead of uniting and working together to end this misery once and for all. And so it has gone on for centuries, and yet you want to know whose side we are on ..."

Once again the Metropolitan turned and seeing that a look did no good, broke in quickly in a supplicating tone of voice:

"God bless and uphold all the Christian Powers, which are sent and maintained by Him. We pray continually to God..."

But here the bishop interrupted the Metropolitan sharply and rapidly:

"We are for Russia, sir, and for the liberation of Orthodox Christians from the infidel. That is what we stand for, and if anyone says otherwise, don't believe them."

Here the Metropolitan broke in again and began making some amiable remark, entirely composed of sugary clichés, which it cost Davna some pains to translate, rapidly, inaccurately and with some skipping.

Daville looked at the grim bishop. He breathed heavily, with some obstruction, and he had a wheezing voice which did not flow gently and regularly on, but came in bursts, with slight catches of the breath, like the explosions of some obscure, long hoarded rage which surely must be filling the man to the brim and bursting out in his every word and gesture.

Daville did all he could to explain to the Metropolitan and the bishop the aims of his government and to exhibit them in the most favourable light, but he himself had no belief in his chances of success, since he was unable to banish that look of anger and offence from the bishop's face, while to the Metropolitan it was a matter of indifference what anybody said, since he listened to all human conversation as to a jumble of meaningless words, with the same affable inattention and equanimity and with the same honeyed, insincere assent.

These dignitaries had been accompanied to the Consulate by Pakhomi, the thin, pale monk who served the Orthodox church at Travnik. This frail, bent man, with the sour, twisted face of one who suffers from indigestion, very seldom came to the Consulate. He regularly refused all invitations on the pretext that he was afraid of the Turks or was unwell. Whenever Daville met him and tried by means of a friendly greeting to engage him in conversation, he doubled up still tighter and puckered up his face still more. His look became furtive (that look Daville knew well on Bosnian faces) and he gazed, not into Daville's eyes, but

lower and askance, now at one of his interlocutor's shoulders, now at the other. Davna was the only person to whom he sometimes talked more freely.

Having been obliged, that day, to come with his superiors, he had sat, hunched and silent, an unsociable guest, on the edge of his chair, as if he were ready to run off at any moment, and looking before him the whole time without a single word. But when Davna met him in the street two or three days after the Metropolitan's departure and began to talk to him "in his own way", the sallow, sickly monk suddenly came alive and spoke out. His glance became sharp and direct. Word upon word, the conversation grew brisker and brisker. Davna challenged him by declaring that all nations, of every religion, all who have expectations, ought to turn their eyes towards the all-powerful French Emperor and not towards Russia, whom the French would humble that very summer, as the last state of Europe which was not subject to them.

The monk's great mouth, which was usually rigidly compressed, now opened wide and displayed in that frail, sickly face teeth which were as white and regular and strong as a wolf's. On either side of his mouth there appeared new lines, never seen before, lines expressive of a villainous, mocking joy. The monk threw back his head and gave a surprisingly loud, derisive, hearty laugh, so that even Davna was transfixed with astonishment. It lasted only a minute. Immediately after, Pakhomi's face as quickly resumed its wonted wrinkles and became once more compressed, puckered and frail. He turned away a little, threw a quick glance about him to see that there was nobody by, put his face to Davna's right ear and said to him in a strong, lively voice which corresponded with his laughing expression of a moment ago and not to that he now wore:

"Listen to what I'm telling you, my friend. Get this out of your head!"

Leaning confidentially towards him, the monk said this in a friendly, careful tone of voice, as if he were making him a present of some value. Then, with a brief salutation, he went at once on his way, avoiding the bazaar and the main streets, as he always did, and taking the side-alleys.

The destinies of all these strangers, plunged and crammed into this damp, narrow valley and condemned to live there for an unspecified time on unusual terms, now suddenly came to a head. The unfamiliar conditions into which they were thrust quickened in each of them the inner tendencies he had brought with him when he came, and drove each of them still more sharply and pitilessly in the direction marked out for him by his own impulses. These impulses developed and found outward expression to a degree and in a form in which in other conditions, perhaps, they never would have done.

In the first months after von Paulich's arrival it was already fairly clear that relations between the new Consul-General and the interpreter Nikola Rotta were strained and were bound to lead to conflict and, sooner or later, to a break. It would, indeed, have been hard to find two people so different and so preordained to misunderstand and quarrel with each other.

The cool, balanced, clear-cut Colonel, who spread all round himself an atmosphere of sharp, crystalline cold and clarity, bewildered and provoked the vain and touchy interpreter by his very presence and roused in him innumerable painfully confused questionings which had hitherto lain dormant or concealed. It would be inaccurate to say that these two men mutually repelled each other, since in fact Rotta alone was repelled by the Colonel as by some huge, immovable iceberg. What was worse, by some inexorable law, he kept on returning and colliding with it over and over again.

One would never have said that men like the Colonel — clever, upright and chilly in every respect — could prove fatal or destructive to anybody. Nevertheless, such was the case here. Rotta was in such a state of inner disintegration and collapse that a chief of this sort was bound to mean his utter ruin. By virtue of his calmness and his almost inhuman detachment the Colonel was poison to the already poisoned interpreter. Had Rotta had as his superior a mild, tolerant man like von Mitterer, or some impetuous, irregular character, moved by human passions, even the worst, he might still have held out somehow. In the former case he would have lived on the man's tolerance, and in the second his dark

and tangled impulses would have found a support and an accomplice in the passions with which both alike would have had to contend and in this continuous clash and friction he would have kept his balance. But against a superior officer of this kind Rotta hurled himself like a maniac against a wall of ice or some unreal concentration of light.

In his very ideas, his methods and his way of setting about things, von Paulich signified for Rotta a great and grave alteration for the worse. First and foremost, Rotta was far less essential to him than he had been to von Mitterer, to whom he had long become indispensable. To von Mitterer he had been a kind of refuge in his heaviest and roughest disputes with the service, a kind of glove for the dirtiest work. Consequently he had served as interpreter in many matters and had in latter years becoming increasingly a sort of *éminence grise*. Whenever, at times of family crisis or official controversy, von Mitterer was attacked by a momentary paralysis of the will, due to exhaustion and liver trouble, Rotta had been there to sustain him, to take the business into his own hands and by that very action to give the enfeebled man a sense of relief and of grateful dependence. The work itself he had found no difficulty in discharging, since it was not difficult in itself but it was only to von Mitterer, and even to him only at that moment and in that situation, that it seemed inextricable and past solution.

All this, of course, was quite unthinkable with the new commander. With von Paulich all work was as smooth and regular as a chessboard on which he played with the calm and composure of a player who ponders long but knows neither fear before a move nor remorse after it, and who needs no one to advise, protect or sustain him.

Apart from this, von Paulich's method of work deprived the interpreter of the last satisfactions which remained to him in his unsuccessful and corrupted life. His arid, hectoring manner towards strangers and juniors and towards all who had no alternative but to rely on him, was for Rotta a pleasure, a wretched one truly but the last and only pleasure in the midst of his inner disorder and collapse, a miserable pretence of strength and a visible sign of the superior status for which he had vainly sacrificed his soul, his health and his youth.

After an outburst of this kind, in which arrogant, astride and red in the face, he had shouted and sworn in the face of someone who could do nothing against him and dared not or could not reply, the interpreter used to feel — only for a moment, it is true, but for a marvellous moment — a deep satisfaction and an immeasurable happiness at having smashed, shattered and annihilated something and at standing now over an opponent who was silenced and laid low. His great gladness exalted him high above all the creatures upon earth, though not so high but that they could all see him and could all measure and feel his own exaltation. And now the Colonel left him not even this mirage of spurious happiness. His very presence now made such proceedings impossible. Under the glance of his cold, dark blue eye no illusion could be sustained, every self-deception was shattered and fell into the void from which it had emerged.

Already during the first weeks, von Paulich had told Rotta at the first opportunity that there was a way of telling people things quietly and getting from them in an agreeable way what was wanted. In any case, he did not wish anyone from the Consulate to address anybody in such a fashion, either in the building or in the town. The interpreter then tried, for the first and last time, to bring his influence to bear on the new Consul and to impose his own ideas on him. That, however, proved quite impossible. Rotta, who had made bullying and effrontery into a second nature, felt in this man's presence as though he had been paralyzed. His lips quivered at the corners, his eyelids drooped still further in his tilted head, he clicked his heels together, said curtly, "I will do as you say, Herr Lieutenant-Colonel," and went out.

Whether he forgot or whether he wanted to try the strength and patience of his new commander, Rotta made two more attempts to burst out and to shout at juniors, in defiance of his express instructions. The second time this happened, the Colonel sent for the interpreter and told him that if it occurred once more, even in the mildest possible form, he might expect the immediate application of the paragraph in the Regulations which relates to the repetition of serious offences against discipline. On this occasion Rotta saw the Colonel's blue eyes suddenly narrow and two fierce, keen sparks appear in their outer corners, completely

altering his look and the expression on his face. From that moment, the interpreter drew back in alarm and began from now on to work up his hatred against his new master, secretly and out of sight but with all the fury and impetus with which he had previously rounded on his victims.

Von Paulich, who had considered Rotta's case as coldly and straightforwardly as he did everything else in the world, saw to it that he made less and less use of him. He sent him as a courier to Brod and Kostajnica, he even waited for von Mitterer to get a new post in which he might be able to use Rotta and might call Rotta to him. But he did not want to do anything himself to remove Rotta from Travnik. Strangely enough, Rotta never thought of freeing himself from a situation from which, as he himself perceived, he could expect no good. Like a man bewitched, he circled round his cold and brilliant chief and clashed with him at regular intervals, each time more sharply, though more in his own mind than in reality.

Davna, who knew, or at least guessed, everything that went on in Travnik, quickly noted Rotta's situation at the Consulate and the idea struck him at once that in due course some advantage might be made of it for French interests. On one occasion, in one of those conversations which the two interpreters used to conduct with each other after their own manner, when they met somewhere in the bazaar or on the road to the Residency, Davna told Rotta jokingly that he could always find a refuge in the French Consulate, if he ever needed one. Rotta answered jest for jest.

After the first clashes there ensued between von Paulich and his interpreter a sullen calm which lasted a whole year. If the Colonel had overloaded his dragoman with work or made excessive demands upon him, if he had shown him hatred or illwill, Rotta would perhaps have lasted out this phase and found the patience to bear with his new master and to endure to the end. But von Paulich's icy manner and the way in which he simply ignored Rotta's personality were bound to lead to a rupture sooner or later.

In the spring of 1812 things came to a head in the Austrian Consulate. The little hunch-backed interpreter could not bear to live unnoticed in this way, confined to his basic duties and

with all his essential impulses and ingrained habits repressed. Losing his self-control, he fell upon the servants and junior officials in the Chancery and in quarrelling with them he directed certain unmistakable threats and warnings to his chief and thus to some extent at least relieved himself. Finally, it came to a clash with von Paulich himself. When the Colonel coldly announced that he would apply the Regulation and despatch the insubordinate and uncontrolled interpreter to Brod, Rotta found strength, for the first time, to take issue with him boldly and openly, declaring loudly that the Consul had no such authority and that he, Rotta, would perhaps despatch the Consul, and that a little further still from Travnik. Von Paulich ordered Rotta's effects to be thrown out of the house and Rotta himself to be denied entry to the Consulate. At the same time he notified the Governor that Nikola Rotta was no longer in the service of the Austrian Consulate-General, that he had ceased to enjoy Imperial protection and that his residence in Travnik was undesirable.

On being thrown out, Rotta at once turned to Davna and through him sought the protection of the French Consulate.

Ever since the Consuls had arrived and the Consulates had been opened, there had never been a bigger rupture or a bigger sensation at Travnik. Not even the marvellous conversion and mysterious death of Mario Cologna had made such a stir or given rise to so many scurrings and tales. Cologna's case had occurred during a general riot and as an integral part of it, but the times were peaceful now. Furthermore, the "Illyrian Doctor" was dead and silent for ever, while Rotta was more alive and vociferous than ever before.

Rotta's expulsion by his Consul and his country were generally looked upon as a great success of Davna's. Davna deprecated this and behaved as a moderate and reasonable victor. Actually, he tried to take advantage of Rotta's situation as best he could, but with circumspection and without haste.

As on so many other occasions, Daville felt himself torn and uneasy at everything which had happened. He could not, dared not, refuse all the advantages which might accrue to the French cause from Rotta's expulsion, since, under the pressure of circumstance and the impulsion of his own temperament, the hunchbacked interpreter was slipping closer and closer to



open treason and was revealing little by little all he knew of the work and plans of his superiors. On the other hand, it offended and pained Daville that he should be forced to cover with his own reputation the conspiracy of the two interpreters, low, unscrupulous Levantines, against a gentleman, a man of honour and intelligence, like von Paulich. In his heart his chief wish was that after Davna had extracted the maximum of advantage from it, the whole affair should be settled and hushed up. But this was not the wish of the two interpreters, and especially of Rotta himself. In his fight against von Paulich he had now found a worthy object for all his distorted and submerged passions and desires. He addressed long letters not only to the Consul but also to the commanding officer at Brod and the Ministry at Vienna, informing them of the whole case but suppressing, of course, the fact that he had entered into relations with the French Consulate. He went to the Austrian Consulate with a kavass from the French Consulate to ask for a few more of his effects; he made public scenes and quarrelled loudly; he invented new demands, he ran breathlessly about the town, went to the Residency and to the Governor's office. In short, he revelled in every form of scandalous conduct, like a frantic woman lost to shame.

Without losing his calm von Paulich nevertheless made the mistake of asking the Governor formally to arrest Rotta as a common purloiner of official documents. This forced Daville to address a letter to the Governor in which he informed him that Rotta had placed himself under French protection and therefore could not be arrested or prosecuted. He sent a copy of this letter to von Paulich, with a declaration that he regretted the whole affair but could not act otherwise, since Rotta, who was perhaps a man of impulsive and difficult temperament but was in other respects a decent character, had placed himself under French protection, which could not be withheld.

Von Paulich sent a sharp reply, protesting against the action of the French Consulate in taking under its protection paid spies, counterfeiters and traitors. He requested Daville to signify in any letter he might address to him in the future that there was no mention of Rotta in it. Otherwise he would return all his letters unopened, so long as this sordid dispute about Rotta lasted.

This further offended and upset Daville, to whom this Rotta affair was becoming increasingly troublesome and unpleasant.

The surly old Governor, finding himself involved in this dispute between the two Consulates, one of them firmly demanding Rotta's arrest and the other firmly opposing it, was bewildered and equally annoyed with both Consulates, but particularly annoyed with Rotta. Several times a day he said to himself, snorting:

"The dogs squabble and fight on my very doorstep."

He notified both Consuls through one of his men that he would sooner resign than allow the two of them to go on brawling in Travnik while their sovereigns were at peace, and that across his own already overburdened back. He had no wish to fall out with either of the Consulates over any matter, let alone over the question of this crazy little man who was a common lackey and a person of no account and as such ought never to be the subject of conversation between imperial officers and persons of rank. Rotta himself he ordered sharply to sober down and to keep what little head he had on his shoulders, since for weeks past he had been a cause of disturbance to the leading men of the town, which up till now had been as quiet as a house of God. He would not be worth all the trouble he was giving even if he had a head of gold and the brains of a Vizier. If he was prepared to live peaceably and honourably in Travnik, good: but if he were to disturb the peace of the town by scuttling between the two Consulates, provoking brawls and dragging both Moslems and Christians into them, then let him take one of the two roads leading out of Travnik, and that as quickly and as soon as possible.

But Rotta fairly filled the town with his feud and dragged into it everyone he could. He took the upper floor of a house belonging to a certain Pera Kaladije, a man of bad reputation living alone. He got gipsy blacksmiths to make him iron gratings for the windows and special bolts for all the doors. In addition to two good English pistols which he kept under his pillow, he also procured a long musket with powder and shot. He prepared his own meals, for fear of poison, and cleaned the place himself, for fear of thieves and plots. There descended on Rotta's rooms that chilly emptiness which prevails in the house of men who are lonely and queer. Shreds and tatters began to pile up and

rust and dust accumulated. This house, which had never in any case been respectable, began with time to look more and more neglected, even from the outside.

A sudden change also came over Rotta himself: he began to waste and decay. He ceased to care for his personal cleanliness and became neglectful in his dress. His shirts were limp, crumpled and worn for too long, his black cravat dribbled with food, his shoes dirty and down at heel. His pure white hair developed overtones of yellow and green, his nails were black, he ceased to shave regularly, he smelt of cooking and drink. His behaviour was too no longer that of the old Rotta. He no longer strode about with uptilted head, strutting and looking disdainfully, but scuttled about the town with a busy, teetering step, whispering confidentially to those who were still willing to talk to him or inveighing in the inn against the Austrian Consul, loudly and challengingly, and repaying his audience with drams of the brandy which he was himself beginning to drink in increasing quantities. With every day that passed there fell away from him the thin gilded crust of his former dignity and of his spurious power and gentility.

Such was Nikola Rotta's life in Travnik, while he thought that he was waging a mighty war against his great and various adversaries. Completely blinded by his morbid hatred, he did not even notice his own sudden transformation and fall and the fact that in his fall he was rapidly retracing the whole track of his long and painful ascent. He never even felt how innumerable petty circumstances were combining to drag him back, like an imperceptible but powerful current, into that life which he had abandoned as a child in the slums of San Giusto at Trieste, right back into the world of gross poverty and vice from which he had run with all his might for thirty years and which he long believed that he had actually outrun.

Daville was angry with himself at his own petty superstitions but was constantly catching himself out in notions of the kind. One of these was the idea that the summer months in Travnik

were unlucky and always brought with them unpleasant surprises. He told himself that this was perfectly natural. All wars and all riots began with the summer, and generally speaking, in summer the days are longer and people have more time and consequently more chance to start all the nonsense and mischief which are a deep inner necessity to them. But even after he had given himself this explanation, he would catch himself, after a few minutes, returning to the same idea, that summer brought unpleasantnesses and that the summer months ("those with no R in them") were from every point of view more dangerous than the others.

That summer began ominously.

On one day in May, which had started off well with two hours of work on his Alexandrines, Daville was sitting with young Freycinet, who had made the journey in order to explain to him verbally the difficult situation of the French depot at Sarajevo and all the troubles of the French transit trade through Bosnia.

The young man was sitting on the veranda, among the flowers, and talking in his rapid and lively Southern fashion.

This was his second year at Sarajevo. During all that time he had only once before come to Travnik, but he had been in constant correspondence with the Consul-General. More and more space in this correspondence had been taken up with complaints about people and conditions at Sarajevo. The young man was completely disillusioned and discouraged. He had lost weight, his hair had begun to go grey at the temples, his face had taken on an unhealthy colour. Daville noticed that his hands shook and there was a tang of bitterness in his voice. There was absolutely no trace of the calm clarity with which he had made his forecasts and his plans during his first visit last summer on that same terrace. ("The East", thought Daville, with that unconsciously malicious pleasure with which men detect and contemplate in others traces of the sickness from which they are suffering themselves, "The East has got into this young fellow's blood and has sapped, unsettled and embittered him.")

Certainly the young man was embittered and cast down. That irritable dissatisfaction with everything and everybody which attacks and overcomes Westerners who come to work in these countries, had obviously filled him to the brim and he had not the strength either to conquer it or to control himself.

His proposals were radical. The whole affair should be liquidated, the sooner the better, and other routes should be sought through other regions where it was possible to live and work with the people. It was clear to Daville that the young man was infected with "Eastern virus" and that he was at that stage of the disease in which, as in a fever, a man is incapable of seeing things as they are or of forming a straight judgement and is incessantly striving and battling against his environment with his whole brain and with every nerve. He was so familiar with this state of mind that, faced with this young man, he was able to play the part of the solid senior who calms and consoles. But the young man rebuffed all consolation as if it were a personal attack and insult.

"No," he said angrily, "they've no idea in Paris how one lives and works here, nobody can possibly know. Only by working with these people and living among them can a man realize to what lengths Bosnian unreliability, conceit, crudity and malice can go. Only we know that."

It seemed to Daville that he was listening to the selfsame words he had spoken and written so many times. He listened to them attentively, never taking his eyes off the young man who was quivering with suppressed passion and deep disgust. "So that is how I looked in Desfossés' eyes and in the eyes of all those to whom I have so many times said exactly the same thing, in the same way and in the same tone of voice", Daville thought to himself. But aloud, as he did so, he consoled and soothed the excited young man.

"Yes, conditions are hard, we all know that from experience, but one must have patience. In the long run French intelligence and spirit are bound to master their violence and conceit. Only we must..."

"We must clear out of here, Monsieur le Consui-Général, and that as soon as may be. Because in this place intelligence and spirit and the expense of effort are wasted and achieve nothing. That is certain at least in regard to the work for which I came here."

"The same disease, the same symptom," thought Daville and continued soothing him and declaring how necessary it was to be patient and to wait and see, that this business could

not simply be abandoned, that in the great Imperial design for a Continental System and for the organization of Europe as an economic whole Sarajevo was a vital point, an ungrateful one but vital, and that to yield at any point might compromise the whole idea and be detrimental to the Emperor's plans.

"That is our share of the strain and bitterness and we must take it upon us, no matter how heavily it falls. Even if we do not see the aim and direction of the plan we are working on, its results will not fail, so long as each holds fast in his place and does not give way. But we must always bear in mind that Providence has given us the greatest ruler of all time, that he is guiding the destinies of all, including our own, and that we can blindly trust his leadership. It is no mere chance that the destiny of the world is in his hands. His genius and his lucky star will guide everything to a happy issue. Relying on that, we can do our work in peace and confidence, in spite of the gravest difficulties."

As he spoke so gently and calmly, Daville listened attentively to himself and stared with surprise at the words and arguments he had never been able to muster during his daily doubts and vacillations. He grew more and more eloquent and persuasive. There happened to Daville exactly what happens to an old nurse who is putting a child to sleep and tells it long stories, until in the end she goes to sleep herself and drops off beside the child that is still awake. At the end of their conversation he was happy and convinced and the young man, whose life had been poisoned by the merchants and carriers of Sarajevo, merely nodded gently and looked at him with bitterness, pursing his lips and twitching his face, which showed suggestive traces of indigestion and biliousness.

At that moment Davna arrived, apologizing for breaking into the conversation, and in a low voice informed the Consul that a courier had come from Constantinople the previous night bringing news of an epidemic in Ibrahim Pasha's harem. The plague which during these last few weeks had been taking its toll throughout Constantinople, had broken into the Vizier's house on the Bosphorus as well. Within a short time fifteen people had died, mostly servants, but among them were also the Vizier's eldest daughter and his son of twelve. All the survivors had fled to the hills in the interior.

As he listened to Davna's heavy news, Daville seemed to see clearly before him the massive, ludicrously bedecked shape of the Vizier, always bending slightly to the left or right and quivering now under fresh blows. Following Davna's advice and the best Eastern etiquet they decided not to ask for an audience with the Vizier at once but to let a few days pass, and the first and heaviest impact of misfortune with them.

When he resumed his talk with Freycinet, Daville felt still wiser and more patient, steeled by another's calamity. He promised the young man, boldly and without hesitation that next month he would pay a personal visit to Sarajevo and see on the spot what he could do with the authorities to arrange better conditions for French transit trade.

Three days later the Vizier received Daville in the Summer Divan on the upper floor.

From a blazing summer day the Consul passed without a break into the dim, cool ground floor of the Residency and shuddered as if he were entering a vault. On the upper floor there was rather more light, but here too, by comparison with the glare and heat outside, a deep, cool shade prevailed. One window was open and the luxuriant leaves of a vine flowed over it into the room. In his accustomed place, without any visible signs of change, the Vizier sat in full costume, leaning to one side like an ancient tombstone. Seeing him in this state, Daville on his side tried hard to seem normal and unchanged, but could only think frantically of what he had to say about the tragedy which had occurred; it ought to be warm and sympathetic but he should not mention specifically those who had died, and particularly not the women, while nevertheless showing his understanding and sympathy.

By his moral toughness, which was the complete counterpart of his physical immobility, the Vizier made things easy for Daville. He listened to Daville's words, in Davna's translation, almost without stirring and without any change of expression; then suddenly, without wasting words on the dead, he passed to the destiny and actions of the living.

"Ah well, the plague visited Stamboul and that in a quarter where it was never remembered to have come before," said the Vizier in a cold, heavy voice, as if he were speaking from lips

of stone. "The plague could not keep away. It was bound to come, for our sins. And I, too, must have been a sinner since it came to my house."

Here the Vizier was silent and Daville quickly told Davna to observe, as a doctor, that the nature of this disease is such and such and that many cases were known in which persons and households of the saintliest innocence had suffered through the chance importation of the germs of this dangerous contagion.

The Vizier slowly turned his head and looked for the first time at Davna, as if he had just noticed him, with that blind look in his black eyes, that looked but did not see, like eyes of stone: then he turned back at once to the Consul.

"No. It all comes from sin, from sin. People in the capital have lost their senses and their shame. They have all gone mad and run after their vices and after pleasure. And nothing is done by those in high places. It all comes from there being no Sultan Selim. So long as he was alive and in power, sin was cast forth from the city, drunkenness and villainy and disorder were driven back. But now . . ."

Once again the Vizier halted in his speech, suddenly, like a machine that has run down; and once again Daville tried to say something comforting and soothing, to explain how in the end a balance must be struck between sin and punishment and how, presumably, there will thus, one day, be an end to the expiation of sin.

"God is One. He knows the measure." The Vizier rejected all consolation.

Through the open window came the twittering of invisible birds, shaking the foliage which trailed into the room. On the hillside which closed the view fields of ripe corn could be vaguely seen, divided by green shrubs or quickset hedges. Suddenly, in the silence which fell after the Pasha's words, the shrill, harsh neighing of a colt sounded from somewhere on the slopes.

The audience ended with some words on Sultan Selim, who had perished as a saint and martyr. The Vizier was moved, though this could not be noted either from his voice or from his face.

"May God give you every joy of your children," he said to Daville as he took leave. Daville quickly replied that after his grief, joy would enlighten the Vizier too.



"So far as I am concerned, I have lost, and lost for ever, so much in life, that now I should best be pleased if I could till my garden, clothed in coarse linen, far from the world and from events. God is One!"

The Vizier uttered this as if it were some ready-made phrase, thought out long ago, or as if it were a picture which was very fresh in his thoughts and had for him a special deep significance, incomprehensible to others.

This summer of 1812, which had begun so ill, continued just as badly.

During the last war, against the Fifth Coalition in the autumn of 1810, things had been in many respects easier for Daville. In the first place, his duel with von Mitterer and his collaboration with Marmont and with the fortress commanders on the Austrian frontier had been, as we have seen, arduous and tiring; but they had at least filled up his time and diverted his thoughts to practical cares and tangible aims. Secondly, the whole campaign had gone well from victory to victory and — this was the main point — it had gone swiftly. Already the early autumn had brought the Peace of Vienna and at least a temporary settlement. But now everything was far away and quite unintelligible: it was frightening in its obscurity and its fantastic proportions.

To pin all his thoughts and his whole life upon the movement of an army somewhere in the plains of Russia and to know nothing about this army, its lines of advance, its resources, or its prospects, but to wait and guess at it all, even at the worst, while walking up and down the paths of the garden about the Consulate — such was Daville's life in these summer and autumn months. And there was nothing to make this waiting easier for him and no one who could help him.

Couriers now came more frequently but they brought little news of the war. The bulletins mentioning the strange names of completely unknown towns — Kovno, Vilna, Vitebsk, Smolensk — could not dissipate uncertainty or remove fear. And these couriers themselves, who were usually full of tales and news of every sort, were now exhausted, surly and silent. There were not even the untruths or the surmises which might rouse one a little and shake one out of all one's broodings and incertitudes.

The work in connection with the transportation of French cotton through Bosnia had already been put in hand and was going on well, or so at least it seemed by comparison with the anxieties and fears for the great enterprise now unfolding somewhere in the North. In reality, the carriers had raised their prices, the countryfolk stole the cotton *en route*, and the Turkish customs were irregular and insatiable in their greed for bribes. Freycinet wrote despairing letters, stamped with the morbidity which comes over foreigners as a result of the food, the people and the discomforts of this country. Daville followed all the familiar symptoms of this disease and sent him wise, balanced, statesmanlike replies, recommending patience in his service of the Empire. Yet at the same time, he himself ran round in circles looking desperately for any kind of human sign which might soothe or hearten him a little in his own doubts and in his concealed but constant terror at it all. But there was nothing at which one could snatch and take hold. As always in such cases, and as once in the case of the young commander from Novi, Daville felt about him a living wall of faces and eyes, cold and dumb as if in accordance with some unspoken pact, or enigmatic, expressionless or false. To whom could he turn, whom could he question, who might know the truth and be willing to tell him?

At the Vizier's he always met with the same brief questions: "Where is your Emperor now?" Daville would answer by naming the place mentioned in the last bulletin and the Vizier would merely wave his hand lightly and whisper, "God grant he may soon get to St. Petersburg." As he did so, he would give Daville a look which made the Consul feel cold in the pit of his stomach and still heavier of heart.

The Austrian Consul's behaviour was also such as could only cause Daville still greater anxiety. As soon as the French Army moved against Russia and the news came that the government at Vienna was this time at Napoleon's side as an ally and was taking part in the expedition with a force of more than thirty thousand men under Prince Schwarzenberg, Daville had visited von Paulich in the hope of having a talk with him on the prospects of the great war in which both their sovereigns were this time happily on the same side. He had been met with a mute and icy politeness. The Lieutenant-Colonel had been more strange and

distant than ever before, he had behaved as if he knew nothing of the war or the alliance and he had left Daville alone to his thoughts of them, to rejoice at the victories and tremble at the failures. When Daville tried to extract from him at least one word of agreement or disapproval, he had lowered his fine blue eyes to the ground, and those blank eyes of his had suddenly become malicious and dangerous.

After each visit to von Paulich Daville had returned home all the more bewildered and depressed. In other ways too the Austrian Consul was obviously bent on giving the Vizier and the public the impression that his sympathies were not in the least engaged in this war and that the whole undertaking was exclusively a French affair. Davna's observations bore this out.

Whenever he returned home with impressions and realizations of this kind, Daville would find his wife busily engaged in the preparation of a winter store. Taught by the experiences of earlier years, she now knew exactly which vegetables kept best and longest, which kinds of local fruit were most suitable for preserving, and what was the effect of damp, cold and changes of weather. And so her bottled fruits and preserves grew in perfection and surpassed themselves from year to year, the food at her table grew richer and more varied and loss and waste grew steadily less and less considerable. The women worked under her orders and under her eye and she herself took a hand in the work all the time.

Daville knew well (he, too, from long experience) that it did not do to interrupt her in her work and that it would not have been of the least use for him to do so, since she had not, never would have, any mind for impractical conversations about the fears and apprehensions which never left him. The least of family cares for the children, the house or himself, was to her a far more important and suitable topic of conversation than the most complicated "state of mind" or attitude regarding the matters he was constantly thinking of and about which he so longed to have someone to talk to. He knew well that his wife (who was in other respects his sole and sure companion) was now and always completely absorbed in the actual moment and in the work now before her, as if nothing else in the world existed and the whole human race, from Napoleon to the Consul's wife

at Travnik, were equally preoccupied, each after his manner, in making the necessary preparations for the winter. It was clear to her that the will of God was accomplished at every moment, everywhere and in all things. And what was there to talk about in that?

Daville sat now in his great chair, put his hand over his eyes, and after an inaudible sigh ("Ah, dear God, dear God!") he took his Delille and opened it at random, in the middle of a poem. Actually he was looking for something which is not to be found either in life or in books; a sympathetic and spiritual friend, willing to hear and able to understand everything, with whom one might talk sincerely and who would answer all questions clearly and frankly. In this dialogue, as in a mirror, he would be able to see for the first time his own true countenance, to know the true value of his work and to define without ambiguity his own position in the world. Here at last he would be able to understand how much of these scruples, forebodings and fears of his was real and well founded and how much was baseless and imaginary. And that would come as a real deliverance in this vale of woe in which his sixth year of isolation was now running its course.

But such a friend did not come. He never does. Instead, there appeared only strange and unwelcome guests.

During his first year it had sometimes happened that some French traveller or foreigner with a French passport arrived and stayed at Travnik, seeking his good offices or offering service. Lately, they had grown more frequent. Travellers appeared, dubious merchants, adventurers, tricksters who had lost their way and had strayed off the highway into this poor, out-of-the-way country. They were all birds of passage or refugees, on the way to Constantinople, Malta, Palermo, and looked on their stay in Travnik as a penance and a misfortune. To Daville each of these unexpected and undesired guests meant a series of troubles and excitements. He had got out of the habit of dealing with his countrymen and Westerners generally; and like all excitable people who are not sure of themselves, he found it hard to distinguish falsehood from truth and wavered continually between groundless suspicion and excessive trustfulness. Scared by the Ministry circulars which were constantly warning Consulates to keep

the strictest look-out for English agents, who were uncommonly sly and skilfully disguised, Daville saw an English spy in each of these travellers and took a whole series of unnecessary and useless steps to unmask them or to defend himself against them. In reality, these travellers were as often as not people who had left the beaten track and were only poor wretches who had lost their way, people in reduced circumstances, refugees or wreckage from a distracted Europe which Napoleon's campaigns and policies had cross-ploughed and harrowed in every direction. From them, too, Daville was sometimes able to get some idea of what "the General" had made of the world during the last four or five years. Daville hated them, once again, for another reason. From them, from their panic desire to be gone as quickly as possible from this place, from their irritation at the disorderliness, uncouthness, slovenliness of these people, from their despairing helplessness in their struggle with the country, the people and conditions, he could judge where his own lot had fallen and what kind of country it was in which he had passed his best years.

Every simple uninvited guest of this sort was pain and discomfort to Daville. They seemed to be all on top of him and to be compromising him in the eyes of the whole of Travnik. He tried every means — money, indulgence, entreaty — to get them away from Bosnia as quickly as possible, so as not to behold these embodiments of his own fate and so as to remove, at least, all who might bear witness to his own wretchedness.

There had been casual travellers of this kind before, but never so many as this year, when the Russian expedition began, and never such eccentric, doubtful and villainous characters. Luckily, even in circumstances like this, Davna's sense of realities never deserted him, nor his *sang-froid* nor his assured presence of mind and his ruthless way with one and all, which disposed of even the toughest cases.

One afternoon, on a rainy day in May, a group of these travellers arrived before the principal inn. A crowd of innumerable children and bazaar loiterers gathered instantly. Out of wraps and shawls emerged three figures in European costume. One was a short, active man: one was a tall, powerfully-built woman, rouged and powdered and with dyed hair, like an actress:

and one was a girl of about twelve. All were exhausted, worn out by the rough roads and by long journeying, hungry, in a rage with each other and with everything about them. There had been no end to the discussions with carriers and innkeepers. The little man, sallow and black-haired, moved with the vivacity of the South, shouted and bawled at the woman and child and ordered them about. Finally, their boxes were unloaded and piled in front of the inn. The restless man took the podgy little girl under both armpits, lifted her and placed her on the topmost box, warning her with threats that she must sit there as still as a living post. He then set about enquiring for the French Consulate. He came back with Davna who regarded him loftily and askance, while the little man explained that his name was Lorenzo Gambini, that he was a native of Palermo, who had hitherto lived as a merchant in Rumania, and that he was returning to Italy since he could no longer endure life in the Levant. They had cheated him, robbed him and ruined his health. He needed a visa to get back to Milan, and had been told that he would get one here, in Travnik. He had an out-of-date passport of the Cisalpine Republic. He wanted to move on at once, at once, since he was going mad, he said, with every day he had to spend among these people and could not answer for himself or his actions if he had to remain here any longer.

Davna arranged with the innkeeper to find them rooms and prepare a meal, without listening to the traveller's threadbare tale. The woman joined in the conversation in the weary, tearful voice of an actress who realizes that she is ageing and cannot for one moment forget it or reconcile herself to the fact. From the top of the box the little girl called out that she was hungry. They all talked at the same time. They wanted rooms, they wanted food, they wanted to rest, they wanted a visa, they wanted to set off from Travnik and leave Bosnia as soon as possible. It seemed, nevertheless, that what they most wanted was to talk and to wrangle with each other. None of them ever listened to the others or took in what they said.

Forgetting the innkeeper and turning his back on Davna, the little Italian shouted at the woman, who was twice as tall as himself: — "Don't interfere! Don't talk to me! Devil take the

first time you ever spoke to me and the first time I ever listened to you. This has all come about through you!"

"Through me! Through me! Oh!" shrieked the woman, appealing to high heaven and all the bystanders to bear her witness, "Oh, my youth, my talent, everything, everything I have sacrificed for him. And now — it's my fault!"

"Your fault, my beauty, yes, your fault, my heavenly sun. It's on your account that I suffer and perish, and it's on your account that I shall kill myself here, on this very spot!" And with a practised gesture the little man produced a large pistol from his capacious traveller's cloak and pressed it to his temple. The woman screamed and ran up to him, although he had no intention of shooting, and began embracing him and babbling to him.

The podgy little girl sat perched on the boxes, placidly munching an Albanian cake which someone had given her. Davna scratched his head. The little man had already forgotten all about the woman and his threat of suicide. He was explaining passionately to Davna that he must have a visa tomorrow morning, rummaging for his dog-eared and disintegrating passport and rating the girl for climbing on to the boxes and not helping her mother.

Having arranged matters with the innkeeper and promised to give an answer early next day, Davna went off to the Consulate, without a glance at this extraordinary family or a further word of reply to the Italian's passionate adjurations and assertions. A crowd of curious onlookers gathered in front of the inn, gazing with wonder and incomprehension at the foreigners, their clothes and their unusual behaviour, as if at a theatre or a circus. Moslems in baggy trousers and working men who were passing by looked blackly from under their eyebrows and at once turned their heads away.

Just as Davna had got back and had managed to recount to the Consul what peculiar visitors they had to deal with and had shown him Gambini's passport, a document of improbable origin, full of visas and endorsements, all loose leaves and additions, a banging and shouting began at the gate. Lorenzo Gambini had come in person and was seeking admission to speak with the Consul face to face. The kavass was repelling him

from the gateway. Some lads from the bazaar had followed him at a distance, feeling that wherever this foreigner went there was bound to be trouble, noise and exciting scenes. Davna went out and called sharply to the perpetually seething little man, who declared that he had deserved well of the French cause and that he would have a word or two to say both in Milan and in Paris. Finally, he complied and went back to the inn, proclaiming that he would kill himself on the Consulate doorstep, if he did not get his passport for tomorrow.

Daville was alarmed, disgusted and indignant and ordered Davna to terminate the matter as quickly as possible, if only to avoid making scenes of this kind before the eyes of the bazaar, and the possibility of still worse scenes to come. Davna, who was completely insensitive to such considerations and was accustomed to look on brawls as one of the regular accompaniments of all work in the Orient, reassured the Consul drily and positively:

"This fellow will never kill himself; and when he sees that we will give him nothing, he will go as he came."

And this was in fact what happened. Two days later the whole family left Travnik after one blazing quarrel between Davna and Lorenzo, in which the Italian threatened at one moment to commit suicide on the spot and at another to make complaints about the Travnik Consulate to Napoleon in person, while his massive wife discharged at Davna the most killing shafts of her former beauty.

Daville, who was always anxious for the reputation of his country and the Consulate, breathed again. But three weeks later yet another unwanted visitor turned up at Travnik. There alighted at the principal inn, a Turk, strikingly well-dressed, who had come from Constantinople and who at once enquired for Davna. He called himself Ismail Raif but he was in fact a renegade Alsatian Jew named Mendelsheim. He too wanted a personal word with the Consul, asserting that he had important information for the French Government. He claimed to have extensive connexions in Turkey, France and Germany, to be a member of the first Freemasons' Lodge in France and to have knowledge of many of the plans of Napoleon's adversaries. He was of strong, athletic build, red-haired and ruddy-complexioned. His manner was full of assurance and he talked



a great deal. His eyes shone as if he were drunk. Davna got rid of him with the help of a ruse he often used. He advised him earnestly to continue his journey at once, without loss of time, and to communicate all his information to the Commanding Officer at Split since he was the only man competent to deal with these matters. The Jew stuck to his point and complained that French Consuls never had any understanding of matters of this sort which the English or Austrian Consul would welcome with both hands and would pay for cash down. Nevertheless, after a few days he too went on his way.

On the day after his departure Davna discovered that before he left he had been with von Paulich and had offered his services against Napoleon. Davna at once informed the commander at Split of this fact.

Ten days had not passed before Daville received a comprehensive letter from Bugojno. This same Ismail Raif informed him that he was stopping at Bugojno and had entered the service of Mustapha Pasha Suleimanpashić. He was writing on Mustapha's instructions and requested in his name that he might be sent two bottles of Cognac, Calvados or any other French beverage, "provided it is strong". Mustapha Pasha was the eldest son of Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak, a dissolute and effete young nobleman, given to many vices but particularly to drink and in no way resembling his father, who was a crafty and deceitful but brave, upright and hard-working man. The Pasha's son lived an idle and dissipated life, battenning on his estates, drinking with idlers and riding about the contryside. Old Suleiman Pasha, who was in other respects stern and efficient in his handling of men, was weak and indulgent to this son of his and always found excuses for his idleness and bad habits.

Davna at once understood the bond between these two men. With the Consul's consent he replied directly to the Pasha's son that he would send him some drink on another occasion but that he recommended him not to rely on this Ismail who was an adventurer and probably an Austrian spy. Ismail Raif wrote back a long letter, defending and justifying himself and proving that he was not any kind of spy, but a good Frenchman and a citizen of the world, a poor unfortunate and a wanderer on the face of the earth. The letter, which smelt of local brandy, concluded with some melancholy verses, in which he bemoaned his fate.

"O ma vie! O vain songe! O rapide existence!  
Qu'amusent les désirs, qu'abuse l'espérance.  
Tel est donc des humains l'inévitable sort!  
Des projets, des erreurs, la douleur et la mort!"

Oh life of mine, oh idle dream, oh swiftly passing span!  
Teased by fond desire, mocked by hope.  
Such, then, is the inescapable lot of men —  
Plans, mistakings, pain and death.

He uttered in the same strain a few times more, justifying and explaining himself in alcoholic prose interlarded with verse and signing himself by his earlier name and his pretended masonic rank "Cerf Mendelsheim, Chev . . . d'or . . ." until drink, events and his vagabond instincts swept him out of Bosnia.

As if by previous agreement between them, no sooner had this Jew ceased to make his presence felt than a second travelling Frenchman arrived, a certain Pepin, a little man, fussily dressed, powdered and perfumed, with a shrill voice and mincing movements. He informed Davna that he had come from Warsaw where he had kept a dancing school, that he had halted in Travnik, because he had been robbed on the journey, and that he was on his way back to Constantinople where he had once lived and where he had a few friends. How he had strayed to Travnik, which is not by any means on the way from Warsaw to Constantinople, he did not explain.

This little man was as brazen as a street-walker. He stopped Daville as he was riding through the bazaar, by running out in front of his horse, and solemnly requested him to receive and listen to him. In order not to provoke a scene in front of everybody, Daville promised he would. But when he got home, trembling with excitement and anger, he at once sent for Davna and charged him to get rid of this incubus. The Consul, who even in his sleep had visions of English agents, asserted that this fellow had an English accent and pronunciation. Davna, who remained unshakably calm, with no illusions and no aptitude for seeing what was not there or improving on what he did see, was already quite clear about this particular traveller.

"Please take note of this man," the Consul said to Davna in agitation. "Please take him off my hands. He is obviously an

agent, sent to compromise the Consulate or for some such purpose. He is an *agent provocateur* . . ."

"Oh no," replied Davna drily.

"What do you mean, oh no?"

"He is a pederast."

"A what?"

"A pederast, Monsieur le Consul-Général."

Daville clutched his head.

"O-o-o-oh! What else is there left to happen to this Consulate? you say then . . .? O-o-o-oh!"

Davna calmed his chief and on the very next day he rid Travnik of Monsieur Pepin. Without saying a word to anybody, he drove this offender into a corner of his room, seized him by his faultless *jabot*, shook him sharply and threatened him with a beating in the middle of the bazaar on the following day and with imprisonment in the Citadel by the Turkish authorities, if he did not move on at once; and the dancing master complied.

Daville was delighted at having seen the last of this vagrant but he remained full of trepidation, asking himself what dregs and outcasts of society the dark and senseless operation of chance would pile on him in this valley, where life was quite hard enough without them.

And so Daville's sixth autumn in Travnik slowly matured and mounted with dramatic suddenness to its climax.

Towards the end of September news arrived of the capture, but also of the burning of Moscow. No one came to congratulate him. Von Paulich continued to allege, with brazen calm, that he had no news of the war and avoided all conversation on the subject. Davna asserted that von Paulich's people took the same line in their public conversation and behaved in all respects as if they had no knowledge of the Austrian Empire being at war with Russia.

Daville took particular care to go more frequently to the Residency and to pay visits to people in the town, but as if by common agreement, all of them, one after another, avoided mentioning the Russian campaign and took refuge in vague general expressions and in non-committal amiabilities. Sometimes it seemed to Daville that they were all looking at him with

tear and astonishment as if he were a sleep-walker moving across some dangerous height and they were all trying not to wake him by some incautious word.

Nevertheless, by degrees, the truth came to light. One rainy day, when the Vizier, as usual, asked Daville what news there was from Russia and Daville informed him of the bulletin on the taking of Moscow, the Vizier expressed his pleasure, although he in fact already knew this piece of news. He offered his congratulations and expressed the wish that Napoleon would go forward, like another Cyrus, a true victor.

"But why is your Emperor turning north now, at the beginning of the winter? It is dangerous, dangerous. I should like to see him a little further to the south," said Ibrahim Pasha, gazing anxiously through the window, into the distance, as if he were gazing somewhere into that same dangerous country of Russia.

The Vizier uttered these words in the same tone of voice as his good wishes and his comparison with Cyrus, and Davna translated them exactly as he translated everything that was said to him, in a dry, flat tone, but Daville felt his bowels begin to move and stir. "That's what I'm afraid of and what they all think and know, and what nobody wants to say," thought Daville, waiting in suspense for the Vizier to continue. But Ibrahim Pasha was silent. ("He won't say it, either," Daville thought with anguish.) After a longer pause, however, the Vizier spoke again, but now it was on a different subject. He related how once Ghisari Tchelebi Khan had invaded Russia and how, in a series of battles, he had scattered the opposing army, which withdrew continually to the north, deeper and deeper into the country. Then winter surprised the victorious Khan. His hitherto triumphant army was bewildered and terrified and the savage infidels, who were hairy men, accustomed to the cold, began to attack from all sides. Then Ghisari Tchelebi Khan uttered the famous words:

"When the sun of his homeland deserts a man,  
Who shall light him on the way of return?"

(Daville was always annoyed at this Turkish habit of quoting verse in the middle of a story, as if it were something of special weight and significance. He had never been able to see the true

appositeness of the lines quoted or their connexion with the matter in hand and he had always felt that the Turks were attaching to them a weight and a meaning which he was unable to feel and to seize.)

The young Khan was violently angry with his astrologers whom he had specially brought with him and who had prophesied a later opening of the winter. He therefore ordered that these wise men who had shown themselves ignoramuses should be bound and should be driven, barefoot and lightly clad, before the leading ranks of the army, so that they might feel in their own persons the effects of their error. It then appeared, however, that these meagre scholars, as skinny and bloodless as lice, bore the cold better than the soldiers. They remained alive, while the hearts of lusty young warriors cracked in their bosoms, like sound beech-wood in a frost. It was impossible, they say, to take hold of steel, since it burnt as if it were white-hot and the skin of the palms was left clinging to it. Such were the sufferings of Ghisari Tchelebi Khan; he lost his magnificent army and barely escaped alive.

The audience ended with blessings and best wishes for the success of Napoleon's enterprise and for the defeat of the Muscovites, who were well known to be bad neighbours with a liking for war, and did not keep their plighted word.

The stories about Cyrus and Ghisari Tchelebi Khan had not of course come out of the Vizier's head but out of Tahir Beg's. He had related them when they were talking in the Residency about the capture of Moscow and the further prospects of Napoleon's Russian campaign. Davna, who had got to know about it all, discovered too the real opinion prevalent in the Residency regarding the situation of the French Army in Russia.

Tahir Beg had explained to the Vizier and the others that the French had already advanced too far and could not withdraw without great loss.

"And if Napoleon's soldiers remain where they are for as much as another week," the Secretary said, "I can see them turning into frontier posts, draped in Russian snow."

An agent reported these words accurately to Davna and he repeated them coldly to Daville.

"At last all my fears are coming true," said Daville to himself, calmly and aloud, as he woke up one winter day.

It was an exceptionally cold December morning. He had woken suddenly, feeling the touch of his own hair on his temples like somebody's icy hand. Opening his eyes, he had uttered these words as at another's command.

He repeated these same words to himself a few days later, when Davna came and reported that there was a good deal of talk at the Residency about the defeat of Napoleon in Russia and the complete break-up of the French Army. The latest Russian bulletin was circulating in the town, with all particulars of the French defeat. It looked in every way as if the Austrian Consulate were getting and distributing copies of the Russian communiqué, though naturally in secret and through agents. In any case Tahir Beg had this communiqué and had shown it to the Vizier.

"It's all coming true . . ." Daville repeated to himself, while listening to Davna's account. Finally he collected himself and quietly ordered Davna to go to Tahir Beg on some pretext, and in the course of conversation, ask him for the Russian bulletin. At the same time he called the other interpreter, Rafa Atijas, and told both him and Davna to repress these unpleasant rumours in the town and assure everyone of the invincibility of Napoleon's army despite the momentary difficulties, which were a result of the winter and the distances and not of any Russian victories.

Davna managed to see Tahir Beg. He asked him for the Russian communiqué but the Secretary was unwilling to give it to him.

"If I give it to you, you are bound to tell Monsieur Daville, and that I do not want. What is written here is too disagreeable to him and his country and I have too much respect for him to wish that he should hear such news from me. Tell him that my good wishes always go with him."

Davna repeated all this to Daville in his pitilessly calm and accurate way and immediately left the room. Daville was left alone with his thoughts and with Tahir Beg's oriental compliment which was enough to make a man's flesh creep. The man with whom an Osmanli hedges so carefully is either a dead man or the unluckiest of mortals. So Daville thought, leaning on the

window and regarding the winter twilight. In the strip of dark-blue sky above Vilenica a young moon stealthily appeared, as sharp and cold as a letter cut in metal.

No, this time the matter would not end as it had before, with triumphant communiqués and victorious peace settlements. What had long ago lain like a premonition at the back of Daville's mind now stood before him as a thing clearly acknowledged, in the cold, alien night, under the sinister young moon, and drove him to think what a complete breakdown and final defeat would mean for himself and his family. He tried to think of it but he felt that for this he needed more strength and more courage than he possessed that evening.

No, this time it would not end as it had always done before, with victory bulletins or peace settlements which brought France new territories and the Imperial Army fresh laurels; it would end in retreat and dissolution. There was a hush upon the whole world and the dumb expectation of a certain and appalling collapse. So at least it seemed to Daville.

During these months Daville remained completely without news, almost wholly out of touch with the outer world on which all his thoughts and fears were dwelling and with which his fate was bound up. Travnik and the whole of Bosnia was riveted in a long, cruel and exceptionally severe winter, the worst of all the winters Daville had spent here. People recounted that there had been a winter like this twenty-one years ago but, as always happens, this one seemed grimmer and harsher. Already in November, the winter had begun to clamp down on life and to change the face of the earth and the aspect of people. After it had settled on this valley, it consolidated and established itself, like some mortal famine, without hope of change. Winter emptied the garners and closed the roads. Birds fell dead from the air, like ghostly fruits from invisible boughs. Wild animals came running down from the steep hillsides and rushed into the town, forgetting their fear of men, in their fear of the winter. In the looks of the poor and homeless one could see the mute fear of a defenceless death. People froze on the roads, looking for bread or warm lodging. The sick died, since there was no cure for the cold.

In the icy night the boards in the roof of the Consulate could be heard cracking with a loud report and the wolves could be

heard howling on Vilenica. The fires in the earthen stoves were kept up throughout the night, as Madame Daville was afraid for the children, having always in mind the boy she had lost four years before.

During these nights Daville and his wife sat after supper, she battling with sleep and fatigue from the day's work, he with sleeplessness and interminable cares. She drowsed and he talked. She found all tales and reflexions on winter and poverty alien and irksome, since she had spent the whole day fighting against them, frail as she was, all muffled up in shawls, but gently persistent and always on the move. He, on the other hand, found in talking his sole, though momentary, relief. Still, she listened to him, although she had long been racked with a desire for sleep, and in this way she did her duty to him, as all day long she had done it to them all.

Daville related everything he could remember about this disastrous winter, the general misery and his secret fears.

He had, he said, seen and experienced much of the evil which befalls man in his dealings with the elements, both those which form his environment and those which dwell within him and spring from human conflicts. He had known hunger and every form of want during the Terror; in Paris twenty years ago it had seemed then that violence and disorder were the only prospect and the only future before the entire country. The huge issues of discredited notes, thousands and thousands of francs, were worth nothing and one went by night into distant suburbs for a scrap of ham or a handful of flour. One chattered and haggled with doubtful characters in dim-lit cellars. Night and day one hurried and worried over the business of maintaining a life which was of very little value and which might be forfeited at any moment through someone's denunciation or by some mistake on the part of the police or merely by some whim of chance.

He remembered, moreover, his campaigning in Spain. Then, for weeks and months on end, he had worn a single shirt which was stuck to him with sweat and dust. He had never dared to take it off and wash it, since it tore into rags and tatters at the least touch, as if it were decayed. Except for his rifle and bayonet and a little powder and shot, the only possession he owned was a wallet of undressed leather. He had taken it from a



dead Aragonese peasant who had set out for the love of God to kill the French Jacobin scum. This wallet had never contained anything except, on days of rare good fortune, a small piece of hard barley bread which he had also taken or stolen from abandoned houses. And then there had been the wild snowstorms against which even better clothing and stronger boots were of no avail and which made a man forget everything else in a search for cover and shelter.

All this he had experienced in the course of his life but he had never before seen or felt to this extent the terrible strength of winter, its dumb, destructive force. He had never dreamed that such a thing as this Eastern misery and want could exist, or this complete paralysis which goes with a long, hard winter and lies heavy on the whole of a mountainous, infertile, miserable country, like the wrath of God. But he had come to know it here in Travník during this winter.

Madame Daville was not, in general, fond of reminiscences, and like all active, genuinely religious people she shrank from the kind of "thinking aloud" which leads nowhere and merely makes us dissatisfied with ourselves, weakens our resistance to our environment and often diverts our minds into byways. Up till now she had listened with benevolent attention but at this point she rose, overcome with fatigue, and announced that it was time to go to bed. Daville was left in the room which grew steadily colder. He sat on, and all alone, with no one to talk to, he "listened" to the cold invading everywhere and tearing at the inmost heart of everything. In whichever direction his mind turned, whether he thought about the East and the Turks and their way of life, with its lack of order and permanence and its consequent lack of aim and value, or whether he wondered what was happening in France or with Napoleon and his army which was falling back, defeated, from Russia, everywhere he came up against suffering and misery and a sinister uncertainty.

So the days and nights of this winter went by, a winter which seemed endless and unrelieved. Whenever it happened that the cold relaxed for a day or two, there came a heavy and abundant snow, adding itself to the drifts of old snow which were gripped by a hard crust of ice, and gave the earth, as it were, a new face. Immediately afterwards the cold set in again, severer than ever.

One's breath froze, water turned to ice, the sun was darkened. One's brain slowed down and became concentrated on protection against the cold. It needed a great effort to remember that somewhere under all this lay the earth, the live, warm, food-giving earth, which flowers and brings forth its fruits. Between the fruits and mankind lay this cold, white, impenetrable element.

The prices of everything had soared even in the early months of the winter, but particularly the price of corn: now corn had completely run out. Famine reigned in the villages, dire shortage in the town. Emaciated peasants could be seen in the streets, with uneasy looks, and with empty sacks in their hands, searching for corn. Beggars importuned from street corners, blue with cold and muffled in rags. Each counted enviously his neighbours every crust.

Both Consulates tried to help the people and to mitigate the miseries resulting from famine and cold. Madame Daville and von Paulich vied with each other in assisting with food or money. A hungry crowd, mostly of children, collected in front of the Consulate gates. At first there were only gipsies and a few Christian children but as the winter developed and want grew with it, Moslem poor who had wandered in from the outskirts of the town began to be seen. During the early days Moslem children from the houses of the town waited for them in the bazaar and mocked them for begging and eating infidel bread. They snow-balled them, shouting:

"Starvelings! Infidels! Have you stuffed yourselves with pork? Starvelings!"

Later on, however, it grew so cold that the town children could not show themselves out of doors. In front of the Consulates a crowd of frozen children and beggars shivered and hopped with cold, so utterly chilled and so wrapped up in tatters of all sorts that it was impossible to distinguish what religion they were of or where they came from. The Consuls distributed so much that even they ran out: but as soon as the winter relaxed sufficiently to allow of couriers coming from Brod, von Paulich arranged with skill and determination for the continuous importation of flour and food both for his own Consulate and for Daville.

The French consignments of cotton through Bosnia had stopped at the very beginning of the winter. Freycinet continued to write despairing letters and prepared to give up the whole enterprise. Besides, a notion prevailed universally among the people that by the high rates they paid their couriers the French had caused not only the rise in the cost of living but also the shortage, since they had taken the peasants away from agriculture. In general, "Bonaparte's war" was to blame for everything. As on so many occasions in history, the world made of its butcher a victim who must bear on his back the sins and transgressions of all; and the number steadily grew of those who, without even knowing why, began to look for relief and deliverance to the defeat and downfall of this Bonaparte, of whom they only knew that he had "become a burden to the earth", since everywhere he brought war, high prices, sickness and scarcity.

In the Austrian lands, again, where the people groaned under a load of taxation, financial crises, military service and bloody casualties, Bonaparte had already found a place in song and story as the cause of all these troubles and the obstacle to each individual's personal happiness. In Slavonia loverless girls sang:

Oh Frenchman, mighty Emperor!  
Let the lads go, let the maids be;  
The quinces and apples have rotted,  
And the shirts embroidered with gold.

This song crossed the Sava and was sung throughout Bosnia and penetrated to Travnik.

Daville was well aware how these general ideas were beginning to find expression in the area, how they were spreading and taking root and how hard and hopeless a task it was to fight them. In addition, now as earlier, he waged this struggle only with reluctance and half-heartedly. He wrote the same reports, he issued the same instructions to his staff and his agents, he made efforts with the Vizier and every single person at the Residency. It was all exactly the same as before; only he, Daville, was different.

The Consul held himself erect, he acted with calm and assurance. Outwardly everything was the same; yet much had altered both about him and within him. If there had been anyone

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able to measure will-power, the trend of thought, and the force of inner tendencies and external movements, he would have found that all Daville's actions were by now much closer to the rhythm which governs the breath, the life and the work of people here in Bosnia than to that to which he had moved six years ago when he came here. All these transformations had taken place slowly and imperceptibly, but steadily and inexorably. Daville shrank from putting things in writing and from rapid, clear decisions, he was afraid of innovations and of new arrivals, he shuddered at all changes and at the idea of change. He preferred the certain minute of peace and repose to the years which come bringing one knows not what.

There were outward changes too which could not be hidden. People who live in these cramped conditions, daily in each other's sight, find it harder to realize that they are ageing and altering. And yet, more especially in these last few months, the Consul had visibly grown feebler and older. The vigorous crest of hair above his forehead had shrunk, had grown lower and had taken on that greyish colour which blonde hair has when it suddenly starts to go grey. His complexion was as ruddy as ever but the skin was drier and was beginning to sag about the chin and to lose its freshness. He was beginning, too, to lose teeth from the severe toothaches which had tormented him this winter. These were the visible traces which, in the course of the years, had been left on Daville by the frosts, rains and damp winds of Travnik, by family cares, small and great, and by innumerable official tasks, but above all by his inner struggle in connexion with recent events in France and in the world at large.

Such was the state of Daville at the end of his sixth year of unbroken residence at Travnik and at the beginning of the events which took place after Napoleon's return from Russia.

When at last the cold spell broke, halfway through March, and the ice, which had seemed everlasting, began to thaw, the town was left as dumb and cowed as after the plague, with its streets washed out, its houses dilapidated, its trees bare and

its people exhausted and worried, as if they had survived the cold only to endure still greater difficulties over food, seed and inescapable and irredeemable debts and loans.

On one such day in March, once again in the morning and once again in that deep, cynical voice in which Davna had for years, pitilessly and monotonously, announced all news, pleasant or unpleasant, weighty or indifferent, Daville learned that Ibrahim Pasha was being replaced, and that without any new appointment. The order stated that he was to leave Travnik and await further instructions at Gallipoli.

On being told in exactly the same way of Mehmed Pasha's move five years ago, Daville had been excited and had felt the need to move about and talk and to take some action against such a decision. Now the present news came as a blow to him and meant, the times being what they were, an inestimable loss; but he no longer found the strength to protest and oppose. Ever since this last winter and the disaster at Moscow, he had been obsessed with the feeling that everything was collapsing and tumbling in ruins and every loss, from whichever direction it came, found its interpretation and justification in this feeling.

Everything was crumbling, Emperors, armies, institutions, riches, ambitions that had reached to heaven. Why then should not this unhappy semi-corpse of a Vizier fall one day, he who for years past had leaned continually to left or right as he sat? It was well known what "awaiting further orders at Gallipoli" meant. It meant banishment, loneliness and destitution, without a word of protest or the possibility of making any explanations or corrections.

On second thoughts it struck Daville that he was losing an old friend and sure protector, and that at a moment when this protection might be most essential for him. Yet nowhere within himself did he discover the same excitement or keenness or the need to write, or to remind, to utter reproaches or to appeal for help, as he had before when Mehmed Pasha left. Everything crumbles, even friends and protectors, and the man who gets excited and tries to save himself or others achieves nothing. And so the Vizier, with his perpetual list, must crumble and go like all the rest. All one could do was to grieve.

While he was still deep in these thoughts, quite unable to reach any decision, a message came from the Residency that the Vizier summoned him to an audience.

At the Residency there was a feeling of flurry and confusion but there was no change in the Vizier. He talked of his transfer as of something entirely understandable as one of the succession of misfortunes which had been coming upon him for years. As if he himself longed for this succession to reach its appointed end as soon as possible, the Vizier had decided not to linger over his departure but to set off in ten days' time, that is, at the beginning of April. He had had word that his successor had already left and he was anxious at all costs not to await him at Travnik. Like Mehmed Pasha earlier, the Vizier asserted that he had been the victim of his sympathy for France. (Daville was well aware that this was one of those oriental untruths or half-truths which mingles in circulation with true affinities and true kindnesses just as bad money circulates with good).

"Yes, yes. So long as France was advancing and conquering, they kept me here and did not dare to touch me; but now her fortunes are waning, they are transferring me and removing me from contact and co-operation with the French."

(All at once the false coin had given place to true, and Daville, forgetting the inaccuracy of the Vizier's premiss, felt the reality of his country's defeat. That chilly and painful construction, alternately stronger and weaker, which had so often stirred the pit of his stomach at the Residency, now stabbed him again, as he listened calmly to the Vizier's speech from its false compliments to its bitter truth.)

"The false is mixed with the true," thought Daville, leaving the interpreter to translate the words he had already grasped well enough, "They are all so mixed that no one can properly distinguish between them. But one thing is certain: everything is crumbling."

The Vizier had already passed from France to his own relations with the Bosnians and with Daville personally.

"Believe me, these people need a sterner and harsher Vizier. It's true they say that the poor throughout this country bless me; and that is all I wish for. The rich and the strong hate me. And at the beginning they misinformed me, too, about you;



but I got to know you and I soon saw that you were my only friend. Praise be to the only God! But believe me, I have often myself begged the Sultan to recall me. I am in need of nothing. I should have liked best to work my plot like an ordinary gardener and so spent my last days in peace."

In reply to Daville's words of comfort and good wishes for a better future, the Vizier rejected all consolation.

"No, no! I see what is in store for me. I know that, as so often before, they will strive to incriminate and murder me and seize my estate. I seem to hear them undermining my high position and doing all they can to break me. God is One. Ever since I lost my dearest child and my fine family, I have been ready for any other calamity. If Sultan Selim had lived, it would all have been different . . ."

Daville knew the machinery of what was to come, and Davna translated from memory, as if it were a passage from some familiar service.

On leaving the Residency Daville was able to observe the unrest and flurry growing at every moment. The motley, intricate household of the Vizier, which for these last five years had been spreading and taking root and settling itself in the house and its surroundings, was now suddenly beginning to totter as if it were collapsing. From every department and courtyard voices could be heard, the clatter of footsteps, the ring of hammers and the bumping of chests and baskets. Everyone was making for his own security and safety. This huge, disunited yet closely knit family was moving into the complete obscurity of Turkey and was seething, cracking and straining in all its members. The only one who remained cool and motionless in this tumult and bustle was the Vizier; he sat in his place, a little tilted to one side like a motley idol of stone, borne in the midst of all these swirling, frightened folk.

Next day servants brought to the French Consulate a whole collection of domestic or tame animals, Angora cats, greyhounds, foxes and white hares. Daville ceremoniously received them and admitted them to the courtyard. The page who accompanied the menagerie stood in the middle of the yard and proclaimed in a solemn voice that these creatures had been pets in the Vizier's house and the Vizier was now handing them over to the

house of a friend. "He loved them and can leave them only to one whom he loves."

The page and the servants were given presents and the animals were herded into the yard behind the house to the great discomfiture of Madame Daville and the extreme joy of the children.

A few days later the Vizier summoned Daville once again, to take leave of him privately, unofficially and as a friend. This time the Vizier was genuinely moved. There were none of the false coinages, none of the half-truths, none of those compliments which are compliments and yet do not ring true.

"All men must part, and now our time is come. We have met like two exiles, banished and confined among these terrible people. We have long been friends here and we always shall be, if ever again we meet in a better place."

Then a great novelty occurred, unknown in the five years of ceremonial at the Residency. Pages ran to the Vizier and assisted him to rise. He got up with that sudden, abrupt movement of his and it could be seen how tall and strong he was. He then made his way slowly and heavily across the room, gliding on invisible feet, like some heavy, elongated cannon-ball on a wheeled trolley. They all moved with him into the courtyard. There stood the polished and all too glossily black carriage, which had once been von Mitterer's gift, and a little beyond it a fine thoroughbred bay horse with white and red nostrils, in full harness.

The Vizier stood beside the carriage and muttered something like a prayer: then he turned to Daville:

"On quitting this alien country, I leave to you this means of quitting it yourself as soon as may be . . ."

Then they brought up the horse, and the Vizier again turned to Daville:

" . . . and this noble animal, to bear you towards every good fortune."

Daville was touched and wanted to say something but the Vizier went on, seriously and scrupulously, to complete the ceremony, as prescribed:

"The carriage is a token of peace and the horse a symbol of good fortune. Those are my wishes for you and your family."

Daville then managed to express his gratitude and to utter his good wishes for the Vizier's journey and for his future.

Even while they had been at the Residency, Davna had found out from someone that the Vizier had made no present to von Paulich and had said goodbye to him briefly and coldly.

In front of the Residency, caravans of horses and carriers were encamped, loaded and overloaded, waiting and calling to each other. Footsteps, orders and arguments echoed through the empty house. Above all there resounded Baki's piping voice. He had been ill and miserable at the very thought of having to travel in such a cold season (there was still snow on the mountains) and over such terrible roads, and the expense, the damage and the impossibility of taking everything had driven him to distraction. He ran from room to room, looking to see that nothing had been left behind, giving orders that nothing was to be thrown away or broken. He had threatened and entreated. Bekhdjet had maddened him with the everlasting smile with which he followed this upheaval. ("If I'd as little sense in my head, I'd of course be grinning myself!") The nonchalance and levity of Tahir Beg offended him. ("He's ruined himself so why shouldn't he ruin everybody else!") The presents which the Vizier made to Daville roused him to such a pitch that he forgot about the baskets and the carriers. He ran from one to the other, rushed off to the Vizier and begged and prayed him at least not to give away the horse. When nothing availed, he sat down on a stripped sofa and told the world, sobbing, how Rotta had once told him, privately and in complete confidence, that when von Mitterer was transferred from Travnik, he had taken with him fifty thousand thalers, his savings over not quite four years.

"Fifty thousand thalers! Fif-ty thou-sand! That German pig! And in four years!" cried Baki and asked himself aloud how much the Frenchman would save, and smote himself on his silken jacket in impotent rage; in approximately the place where his thighbone must have been.

At the end of the week Ibrahim Pasha and his escort set off on their journey, in a cold rain which turned into a wet snow on the hills. He was accompanied by both Consuls with their kavasses. There were also a fair number of the Travnik notables

on horseback and of people on foot who went part of the way, since Ibrahim Pasha was not leaving clandestinely and was not pursued by general hatred as Mehmed Pasha had once been. For the first two years feeling had been against him, as it had been against the majority of his predecessors, and there had been ferment and intrigue among the leading men. But in time, this grew less and less. The Vizier's unbending rigidity, his uprightness in money matters and, in addition, Tahir Beg's skill, moderation and breadth of vision in the government of the country had gradually created a tolerable situation and cool but peaceable relations between the Residency and the Begs. The criticism made of the Vizier had been that he did nothing for the country and took no steps against Serbia. But the Begs made these criticisms more to appease their own conscience and stress their own keenness than because they really wanted to break the unproductive but agreeable lull which prevailed during Ibrahim Pasha's long Vizierate. On his side the Vizier complained, with a good deal of justice, that the impossibility of sending an army against Serbia was due solely to the slowness, disorderliness and disunion of the Bosnians. And since the Vizier grew more and more like a corpse as the years went by, the judgements on him grew milder and milder and the opinion of his government more and more favourable.

Little by little the cortège escorting the Vizier dwindled and fell off. The first to quit were those on foot, then the horsemen one by one. Finally, there remained only the Ulema, a few notables and both the Consuls with their suites. The Consuls took leave of the Vizier at the same café where Daville had once taken leave of Mehmed Pasha. The leaning arbour still stood in front of the café, in a pool of water and black with the rain. Here the Vizier halted his escort and bade farewell to the Consuls in a few indistinct words which nobody translated. Davna repeated aloud his master's greetings and good wishes, while von Paulich replied in Turkish himself.

The cold rain poured down. The Vizier was on his strong, quiet, broad-backed horse, which was known at the Residency as "The Cow". He was wearing a great mantle of heavy fur and of a dark red shade, and its cheerful colour contrasted strangely with the dismal, damp surroundings. Behind the Vizier could

be seen Tahir Beg's yellow face and glittering eyes, the long sportsman's countenance of Eshrev Effendi the doctor and a bulging mass of clothing out of which peeped Baki's blue eyes, wrathful and on the verge of tears.

They were all in as much hurry to get away from this sodden valley as if it had been an official funeral.

Daville went back with von Paulich. It was past noon. The rain had stopped and at times a diffused glow of sunlight came through, scantily and without warmth. Thoughts and memories struggled to break through their superficial conversation. As they drew nearer the town, the valley grew steadily narrower. The young grass was showing on the steep slopes, with blue, rainy shadows lying over it. In one place Daville saw a few half-opened flowers of yellow primrose and at once felt all the sadness of his seventh Bosnian spring, and that with such force that he barely succeeded in replying with polite monosyllables to some quiet observations from von Paulich.

Daville was surprised when, ten days after the Vizier's departure, he received the first news of him. At Novi Pazar Ibrahim Pasha had met the Siliktar Ali Pasha, his successor in the post of Vizier of Bosnia, and they had remained there several days. As a French courier from Constantinople had arrived at the same time, Ibrahim Pasha had sent his friend by him the first greetings from the journey. The letter was full of friendly recollections and good wishes. Ibrahim Pasha added, incidentally, a few words about the new Vizier. "I wish, my esteemed friend, that I could describe my successor to you but I find it quite impossible. I can only say, God have mercy on the poor and all who have no protection. Now the Bosnians will see . . ."

What Daville learned from the courier and subsequently from Freycinet's letters harmonized entirely with Ibrahim Pasha's impressions. The new Vizier arrived without any staff of officials, with no pages and no harem, "as naked and single-handed as a bandit in the forest", but with twelve-hundred well-armed Albanians, "dangerous-looking" men, and two field cannon. He was preceded by his reputation as a reckless shedder of blood and the cruellest Vizier in the Ottoman Empire.

Somewhere on the road between Plevlje and Priboj one of the Vizier's cannon stuck fast in the mud, as the roads were always heavy going, and especially at this season of the year. When he got to Priboj, the Vizier executed on this score all the government officials there, without exception, (luckily the total was only three), and two of the most prominent men from the town. An outrider went before him with strict instructions for the repair and ordering of the roads. But the instructions were superfluous. The example of Priboj had produced its dreadful effect. Workmen and foremen swarmed on the road from Priboj to Sarajevo, gaps and potholes were filled in, and the wooden bridges were repaired. Terror made smooth the Vizier's path.

Ali Pasha travelled slowly and stayed longer in each town, introducing his regime. He gathered the taxes, executed insubordinate Moslems and arrested the leading men and absolutely all Jews. At Sarajevo, according to the exhaustive and graphic account sent by Freycinet at the beginning of May, the terror was such that the principal Begs and merchants went out to beyond the Goats Bridge to greet the Vizier and bring him the first gifts. Ali Pasha, who knew that the Begs of Sarajevo were famous for the cool and defiant reception they always gave Viziers on their way from Constantinople to Travnik, roughly declined to receive this delegation, shouting loudly from his tent that they were to get off the road and that he would find in their homes any of them who might be of use to him.

Next day all the richer Jews in Sarajevo were arrested, and a few of the leading Begs. One of them, who had merely ventured to ask the reason for his arrest, was bound and bastinadoed in the Vizier's presence.

All this was retailed in advance up and down Travnik and the Vizier had already grown to the dimensions of a monster in the popular tales. But his actual arrival at Travnik, and the way in which he received the notables and held his first Divan with them, surpassed the rumour which had gone before him.

On that day in May the first to enter Travnik were a detachment of three hundred of the Vizier's Albanians. In wide, regular ranks, they were all as like as beads on a thread and as comely as girls. They carried short muskets and marched

in slow time, looking straight before them. Next came the Vizier, with a small suite and a troop of horse. They too rode at a slow, funereal pace, with no sound or shouting. In front of the Vizier's horse, at the head of the cortège went a huge warrior holding a great, naked sword before him in both hands. Not the most frantic Bashibazouk, nor troops of wild Tcherkesses, yelling and volleying, would have terrified people as much as this slow and soundless procession.

Ali Pasha's usual arrests of Jews and notables were carried out that same evening, on the principle that "a man talks differently when he's had a night in prison". If any of the family or friends burst into tears, or lamented or wanted to give the arrested man something or aid him any way, he was bastinadoed. All the heads of Jewish households were arrested, as Ali Pasha had an exact list and maintained that nobody paid more to free himself than a Jew and nobody thereafter spread such panic through a town as the Jews did. And the people of Travnik, who remember everything, saw among other portents and humiliations seven of the Atijas family being led along on one chain.

That same night, the parish priest of Dolac, Fra Ivo Janković, the Guardian of the monastery at Guča Gora and the monk Pakhomi were led away, bound and thrown into the Citadel.

Early next morning all those who had previously been imprisoned for murder or major thefts and were there awaiting the pronouncements of Ibrahim Pasha's justice, which had been slow and considerate, were led out from the Citadel. By sunrise they had already been hanged at the crossroads of the town, and at noon the notables ransomed themselves at the first Divan held in the Residency. This hall of the Divan could recall many stormy and perilous sessions, it had listened to many grave words, weighty decisions and sentences of death, but it could recollect nothing like that silence which checked the breath and froze the bowels. Ali Pasha's skill lay in his ability to evoke, maintain and spread such an atmosphere of terror that it overwhelmed and shattered even those who feared nothing, not even death.

The first announcement the Vizier made to the assembled notables, after the reading of the Sultan's decree, was a death

sentence on the Governor of Travnik, Resim Beg. Ali Pasha's blows were particularly terrible, in that they were unexpected and incredible.

Three weeks before, at the time when Ibrahim Pasha had left Travnik, Suleiman Pasha the Skopljak had once again been with the army somewhere on the Drina and had declined, on suitable grounds, to return and deputize until the arrival of the new Vizier. In consequence, old Resim Beg, the Governor, had been left in supreme command at Travnik. The man had already been arrested, the Vizier said, and would be executed on Friday since during the period of his acting for the Vizier the old man had governed in such a slack and disorderly fashion that he deserved death twice over. This was only the beginning. After him would come all the rest who had taken upon themselves imperial offices and the cares of state, but had not discharged them properly or had openly or covertly acted contrary to them.

Following this announcement servants came in with coffee, tobacco and sherbet.

After coffee, Halid Beg Teskeredjić, as the oldest of the Begs, spoke a few words in defence of the unfortunate Governor. While he was still speaking, one of the attendants, after serving the Vizier, withdrew through the door on the right, walking backwards. At this point he collided lightly with a pipe-bearer and knocked over one of the pipes. As if he had been expecting this, the Vizier's eyes blazed; he leant to one side, straightened out and hurled at the paralyzed servant a great knife which he kept somewhere beside him. There ensued a scuffle among the attendants who led out the poor wretch dripping with blood, and a still greater consternation among the Ayans and Begs who looked straight in front of them, each man into his coffee-cup, forgetting the pipes which were smoking beside them.

Only Halid Beg retained his calm and presence of mind and completed his defence of the old Governor, begging the Vizier to consider his age and his previous services rather than his present errors and shortcomings.

In a harsh, clear voice, the Vizier said sharply and decisively that under his government every man would get his due; the



deserving and obedient would be rewarded and recognized, the worthless and insubordinate would meet with death or the bastinado.

"I have not come here for us to tell each other lies or exchange sweet nothings, or to sleep on the divan," the Vizier concluded, "but to bring order to this country which is famous as far as Stamboul for taking pride in its own disorderliness. There is a blade for even the stubbornest head. The heads are on your shoulders; the blade is in my hand, and the Sultan's decree under my cushion. Let every man govern and direct himself accordingly who wishes to eat and behold the sun. Remember that yourselves and make it clear to the people, and let us strive together to accomplish what the Sultan requires of us."

The Begs and Ayans rose and took their leave with wordless greetings, glad to be alive and as dazed as if they had witnessed a display of magic.

Next day the Vizier received Daville in solemn audience. His Albanians came for Daville, in full-dress uniform and well mounted. They rode through deserted streets and an almost lifeless bazaar. Not a door opened anywhere, not a window was raised, not a head showed itself.

The audience proceeded according to protocol. The Vizier presented the Consul and Davna with fine furs. It leaped to the eye at the Residency that the rooms and corridors were empty, without furniture or ornament; and the number of officials and servants was remarkably small. After the helter-skelter which had prevailed in the Residency under Ibrahim Pasha, everything now seemed bare and deserted.

Excited and curious as he was, it came as a surprise to Daville when he saw before him the new Vizier. He was a tall, powerful man, but smallboned, and he walked with a brisk, rapid step, with none of that ponderous dignity which all Turkish personages affect. His face was swarthy, the complexion dark, his eyes large and green and his beard and moustaches completely white and clipped unusually short.

The Vizier talked easily and freely and laughed frequently and more loudly than is customary with a Turkish dignitary. Daville asked himself whether this was really the same Vizier

of whom all these dreadful tales were told and who only yesterday had sentenced the old Governor to death and attacked a servant with a knife in this very hall.

The Vizier laughed as he recounted his plans for reducing the country to order and seriously and energetically heading an expedition into Serbia. He encouraged the Consul to continue working as heretofore and assured him of his firm desire to extend to him every attention and protection. On his side, Daville was profuse in compliments and declarations, but he could see at once that the Vizier's repertory of fine words and amiable grimaces was a meagre one, since, as soon as he left off laughing or talking even for a minute, the Vizier's face grew dark and hard and his eyes grew restless as if they were seeking the place to strike. The cold glare of those eyes was insupportable and contrasted strangely with his loud laugh.

"These Bosnian Beggars will already have told you about me and my methods of work. Don't let any of that upset you. I believe that I am not acceptable to them, but I did not come here to please them. They are fools who want to lord it in idleness and to talk big and bold. But that cannot be. The time has come for them to recover their senses; only men are not brought to their senses by appealing to their heads, but on the contrary by appealing to the soles of their feet. I have never yet seen a man forget having been soundly bastinadoed, although I have hundreds of times seen men forget the wisest of advice and instruction."

The Vizier laughed loudly and a certain youthful, capricious expression played about his lips and his clipped moustaches and beard.

"Let them say what they like," the Vizier went on, "but believe me, I am going to drive discipline and order into these people's very bones. Don't concern yourself about that, but if there is anything you need, come straight to me. It is my wish that you should be content and at peace."

This was the first time that Daville had been face to face with one of those completely illiterate, rough and bloodthirsty Ottoman governors whom he had only known hitherto from books and reports.

There followed then one of those periods when everyone tries to make himself small and inconspicuous, everyone seeks shelter and cover, so that it was said in the bazaar then that "even a mousehole is worth a thousand ducats". Fear lay upon Travnik like a fog and oppressed everything that had breath or thought. It was that great fear, invisible and imponderable, but all-powerful, which descends from time to time upon human communities and bows or severs every head. At such a time many people, blinded and dazed, forget that such qualities as intelligence and courage exist, that nothing in life lasts for ever, and that, although human life, like everything else, has its value, that value is not unlimited. And so, deluded by the momentary spell of fear, they pay a far higher price for their bare life than it is worth, they do mean and abject things, they degrade and humiliate themselves, and when the moment of fear passes, they see that they have ransomed this life of theirs at too high a cost, when they were not even in danger but only subject to the irresistible spell of fear.

The Sofa at Lutva's café was left deserted, although spring had come and the lime-tree which shadowed the Sofa had begun to show green. All the Begs of Travnik ventured to do was humbly to beg the Vizier to pardon the Governor for his offence (although nobody knew what this had been) and to spare his life out of consideration for his age and his previous services. All the other prisoners in the Citadel, the dicers, the horse-thieves, and the incendiaries, were convicted after a brief trial and executed, and their heads were stuck on poles.

The Austrian Consul at once took up the matter of the arrested friars. Daville was unwilling to be outdistanced by him: only besides the friars he also made mention of the Jews. The friars were the first to be released. Then one by one the Jews were let go: they at once laid themselves under contribution and deposited such a large sum in ransom at the Residency that all the coffers of the Jewish community were emptied down to the last farthing, that is to say, down to the last farthing of the sum set aside for bribery. The one who remained longest in the Citadel was the monk Pakhomi, whose cause no one took up. Finally, he too was ransomed by his few and poor parishioners for a round sum of three thousand groschen, more than two

thousand of which was contributed by two brothers, Peter and John Fufić. Of the Begs of Travnik and other places, some were released and others arrested, so that there were always ten or fifteen of them in the Citadel.

It was thus that Ali Pasha began his term of office in Travnik and urgently made ready an army for Serbia.

25

The calamities which descended on Travnik with the arrival of the new Vizier, weighing heavily on the whole population and as huge as the universe itself for any individual whom they happened to strike, were of course confined to this mountain chain which encircles and hems in the town and to the reports of the two Consuls at Travnik, which in these days no one in Vienna or Paris managed to read with attention. The whole wide world was filled at the time with rumours of the great European drama of Napoleon's collapse. The period around Christmas and the New Year was spent by Daville in anguished expectation and in a panic feeling that all was lost. But as soon as it was known that Napoleon had got back to Paris, things took on a milder aspect. Reassuring reports began to come in from Paris, instructions and circulars, news of the forming of fresh armies and decisive measures in all Departments. Once more Daville was ashamed of his timidity. But this same timidity drove him now to abandon himself once again to indefinite hope, so vital is a weak man's need to deceive himself and so boundless the possibility of his being deceived. And so this painful, fatuous see-saw, on which Daville had been mentally rising and falling for years past, began again, with its alternation between daring hopes and profound hopelessness. Only at each impulse hope dwindled and grew a little less.

At the end of May came the bulletins of Napoleon's victories in Germany, at Lutzen and Bautzen. The old game was once more in progress. But at Travnik such want and such abject fear of the new Vizier and his Albanians prevailed at this time that there was nobody to whom the victory bulletins could be communicated.

It was just at this time that Ali Pasha set off for Serbia, having first "enforced discipline and order" upon all without exception. In this respect also his procedure was different from that of all his predecessors. Previously these departures for Serbia had been a public ceremony. For days and weeks the local commanders from the fortresses in the interior of Bosnia had gathered on the Travnik 'plain'. They had come in slowly and following their own inclination and had brought with them a force of whatever kind and numbers they fancied. Once they had reached Travnik, they settled down and started bargaining with the Vizier and the authorities, putting forward demands, stipulating conditions, asking for provisions, equipment and money; and all this was disguised under an appearance of enthusiastic demonstrations and warlike parades.

At such a time idle and sinister strangers, fully armed and equipped, used to walk about Travnik. This motley, turbulent fair lasted for days on the Travnik 'plain'. Fires burnt and tents were pitched. In the middle rose a pole with the three horse-tails, sprinkled with the blood of the sheep which were slaughtered as a sacrifice to the luck of the expedition. Drums were beaten, pipes trilled, prayers were read. In short, everything was done to delay departure. Very often the most impressive part of the whole affair lay in the army's marching off and the ceremonies which accompanied it, so that most of the warriors never saw the battlefield at all.

This time, under Ali Pasha's hand, it all took place in stern silence and great fear, with no special solemnities but also without any lingering or haggling. There was no food anywhere. The men lived on a scanty dole from the Vizier's granaries. No one had any cause to sing or play. When the Vizier came out in person to the plain, his executioner cut down the commander of Cazin for having brought ten men less than he had promised. The Vizier at once appointed a new commander from his horrified contingent.

This was the manner in which the army set off this time for Serbia, where Suleiman Pasha was already waiting with his force.

Once again there remained behind in Travnik as supreme authority, old Resim Beg, the Governor, whom Ali Pasha had

condemned to death immediately on his arrival and whose life had barely been saved by the Begs. The fright which the Governor had had then was the Vizier's best guarantee that he would handle affairs strictly this time, according to Ali Pasha's wishes and intentions.

What use would it be, thought Daville, to transmit to this unfortunate old man the bulletins about Napoleon's victories? And to whom else was it worth communicating them?

The Vizier went off with the army and his Albanians but terror remained behind him, as cold and hard and enduring as the hardest wall; there remained too the thought of his return, more potent than any threat and more terrible than any penalty.

The town remained as it were deaf and dumb, as empty, impoverished and hungry as at no time in the past twenty years. The days were now long and sunny, but less time was spent in sleep and hunger came quicker than during the short winter days. A few wasted, scabby children drooped about the street, looking for what was not there, namely wholesome food. People went as far afield as the Sava country for corn, or even for seed. Market day was the same as normal days. Many shopkeepers did not even open. The merchants who sat on their counters, were gloomy and depressed. There had been no coffee or overseas goods ever since last autumn. There was no food. The only shoppers were those who would have liked to buy what did not exist. The new Vizier had imposed such a levy on the bazaar that many people were obliged to borrow in order to ransom themselves; and the terror was so great that no one dared to complain, even between the four walls of his home.

In the houses and shops tales were told of how six Christian emperors had struck at Bonaparte, how they had all conscripted every living man into their armies and how they would neither plough nor dig nor sow nor reap until Bonaparte was overcome and humbled.

Even the Jews now avoided being seen about the French Consulate. Freycinet, who had started to liquidate the French agency at Sarajevo, reported that the Jews there had suddenly raised all the rates of exchange and all their demands so that he was unable to meet all his obligations. Nobody ever replied

from Paris to a single question. For three months now the money for Consular salaries and expenses had not arrived.

While the change of Viziers was taking place at Travnik and while great events were being enacted in Europe, in the little consular world things pursued their natural course; new lives were born and old lives gave and broke. Madame Daville was in the last months of a pregnancy which she bore as easily and inconspicuously as the one two years ago. She spent the whole day long with her seamstresses, in the garden. Thanks to von Paulich she had managed this year to get the necessary seeds from Austria and had great expectations of her seedlings, although this confinement came at an awkward time for her, just when her presence in the garden would be needed most. At the end of May a fifth child was born to Daville, this time a boy. The child was weak and was therefore christened at once, and entered as Auguste-François-Gérard in the register of the parish of Dolac.

Everything in connexion with Madame Daville's confinement went off exactly as it had the last time — gossip and lively sympathy among the whole female population of Travnik, visits, enquiries and good wishes from all sides, even birthday presents, in spite of the shortages and the general want. This time, however, there was no present from the Residency, since the Vizier had gone off with the army to the Drina.

Everything was changed from two years ago, both the relations between people and conditions in the country, but the general idea of family life remained unchanged and everything which had to do with it had a solid and unchanging attraction for these people, like a holy relic whose preciousness was universal, perpetual and independent of changes and events in the world at large. In such communities as this each man's life is centred in his family, as the most perfect form of the closed circle. But these circles, though strictly sundered from each other, have somewhere their invisible common centre on which rest a part of their weight. Consequently nothing which happens here in any one family can be entirely a matter of indifference to any of the others and so all of them take a sympathetic interest in all family events, births, weddings and deaths, and they do so eagerly, sincerely and with the keenness of natural impulse.

About the same time, the former dragoman of the Austrian Consulate, Nikola Rotta, fought his last, insensate, desperate battle with his destiny.

There was an old cook, a Hungarian woman, who had served for years in von Mitterer's family and was hardly able to move from feebleness and from rheumatism in the legs. She was a consummate cook, a devoted friend of the family and, at the same time, an intolerable tyrant to all the staff. Anna Maria had quarrelled and made it up with her for a full fifteen years. As during recent years she had become very heavy on her feet, they had taken on a young woman from Dolac to help her. Her name was Lucia and she was strong, useful and active. She was so good at smoothing out the humours of the old cook that she learnt cooking and kitchen work from her, and when the von Mitterer family left Travnik and, naturally, took their "house dragon" with them, as Anna Maria called the old cook, Lucia remained behind as cook to von Paulich.

This Lucia had a sister, Andja, who was the curse of the family and a disgrace to the whole community of Dolac. Even as a girl she had entered on the paths of backsliding and had been denounced from the pulpit and expelled from Dolac. She now kept a roadside café at Kalibunar. Like all her family, Lucia suffered much on account of this sister, whom she loved amazingly well and with whom she had never broken, in spite of everything. Without letting anyone else know, she saw her from time to time, although these visits caused her more pain than even her longing for her sister, since Andja stuck steadfastly to her own way of life and, after pleading with her in vain, Lucia wept over her each time as if she were dead. All the same, they never entirely ceased to see each other. Wandering in his idle and inconsequent, though outwardly busy and important, way about Travnik and its environs, Rotta often came as far as Andja's café at Kalibunar. Little by little he struck up an acquaintance with the abandoned woman who like him had been cast forth from her own sphere and had begun to age and to take to drink.

A little before Easter, Andja sought and found a way of seeing her sister Lucia. In the course of their conversation she proposed to her curtly and bluntly that they should poison the Austrian Consul. She had brought the poison with her.



The plan was of the kind that might be concocted at night in a café of ill fame, between two ailing and unhappy beings, under the influence of brandy, ignorance and hatred and in a completely besotted condition. Acting entirely under Rotta's influence, Andja swore to her sister that the poison was such that the Consul would waste away and die quite gently and imperceptibly, as if from some normal disease. She promised her a large reward and a lordly life with Rotta to whom she would become engaged and who would once again occupy some great office after the Consul's death. Here was the cash, in ducats. In short, they might all be left happy and free of care for the whole of their lives.

Lucia was faint with terror and shame when she heard what her sister was proposing. She at once took the two white phials and hid them quickly in the pockets of her trousers; she then seized the wretched woman by the shoulders and began shaking her, as if to wake her from some unhealthy coma. She besought her by their mother's grave and by all the relics of the saints to come to her senses and put away such thoughts and designs. In order to convince and shame her, she spoke to her of the Consul's kindness and of the sinfulness and horror of the very idea of requiting his kindness like this. She advised her to discontinue at once, not only this particular scheme but all contact with Rotta generally.

Surprised at the resistance and disapproval she had encountered, Andja appeared to give up her evil design and asked her sister to give her back the phials. But Lucia would not hear of it, and on this they parted, Lucia, shattered and weeping, and Andja in silence, with a sullen and enigmatic expression on her face. Lucia did not close her eyes all that night and was long tormented with indecision. But when the morning dawned, she went off unobserved to Dolac, confessed the whole affair to the parish priest, Fra Ivo Janković, gave him the phials of poison and begged him to do whatever he thought fit, provided a tragedy were averted and a crime prevented.

The same morning, without losing time, Fra Ivo visited von Paulich, told him of the whole matter and handed over the poison. The Colonel at once wrote Daville a letter, in which he informed him that his protégé Rotta had attempted to poison

him. Proofs and witnesses of this were to hand. The wretch had not succeeded in this affair, nor would he succeed, but he, von Paulich, left it to Daville's good judgement to decide whether he should continue to extend the protection of the French Consulate to such an individual. In a similar letter he further informed the Governor of the whole business. Having done this, the Colonel continued to work and live as peacefully as before: he ate in the same manner with the same servants and the same cook. Everyone else was greatly perturbed — the Governor, the friars, and particularly Daville. Davna received orders to face Rotta with the choice of fleeing immediately from Travnik or of losing the protection of the French Consulate and being arrested by the Turkish authorities for a proven attempt to poison.

That same night Rotta disappeared from Travnik together with Andja from the café at Kalibunar. Davna helped him to escape to Split. But at the same time Daville notified the French authorities at Split of Rotta's recent exploits and recommended that, as a dangerous and unreliable person, he should not be used for any service employment but should be driven further afield in the Levant and left to his fate.

## 26

**T**his time the summer months brought some relief and tranquillity. The fruit came in its due season, the white wheat ripened and people began to fill out and relax a little. But rumours never ceased, of campaigns, of a great decisive struggle and of Napoleon's inevitable collapse some time before the autumn. The Brothers, in particular, fostered these whisperings among the people, and this they did with such energy and secrecy that Daville was unable to catch them at it or to counter them as the occasion required.

On one of the first days in September von Paulich visited his French colleague with a larger following than usual. All through the summer, while exciting rumours and highly improbable items of news had been circulating against the French,

von Paulich had remained calm and consistent in his dealings with all parties. Each week he had sent Madame Daville his samples of flowers or fruit, raised from the seed they had bought together. At his rare meetings with Daville he had asserted that he did not believe in a general war and that there were no signs that Austria would abandon her neutrality. He had quoted Ovid and Vergil. He had explained the causes of famine and want at Travnik and had expounded the way in which these shortages could be averted. And as always, he had talked of all this as if the subject under discussion were a war on some other planet and of a famine at some other extremity of the world.

Now, at noon precisely, on this calm September day, in Daville's study on the ground floor, von Paulich sat opposite Daville, more formally than usual, but as severe and cold as ever. He had come, he said, on account of the insistent reports which were circulating among the local population regarding the imminence of war between Austria and France. So far as he was aware, these reports were inexact and he wished to assure Daville of this fact. Nevertheless, he wished to take this opportunity of telling him how he conceived their relations if it should indeed come to war. And, gazing at his clenched white hand, the Colonel calmly set forth his views.

"In all that relates to politics and war our relations must, in my view, remain as before. In any case, as two men of honour and Europeans, who have been cast upon this country in the execution of their duty and forced to live in exceptional conditions, I think we ought not to harry and abuse each other in front of these barbarians, as may have happened before. I have thought it my duty to say this to you, on account of these sensational reports which I believe to be without foundation, and to ask you for your opinion".

Something quivered in Daville's throat.

From the unrest of the French authorities in Dalmatia he had seen in these last few days that something was in the wind, but he had had no other news, although he did not wish to let von Paulich see this. Having collected himself a little, he thanked von Paulich in a voice hoarse with emotion, adding at once that he was entirely in agreement with his ideas, that this had always been his own view and that it had been no fault of his

if things had sometimes been otherwise in the days of von Paulich's predecessor. Daville even wished to go a step further.

"I hope, my dear sir, that war will be avoided but if it has to come to that, I hope that the war will be waged without hatred and will not last long. I believe that in this event the tender and exalted family ties which link our two Courts will soften all harshness and hasten the conclusion of peace."

At this point von Paulich, who had hitherto looked straight in front of him, suddenly lowered his eyes and his expressionless face became stern and fierce. And so they parted.

A week later special messengers arrived, the Austrian from Brod and after him the Frenchman from Split, and both Consuls were notified almost at the same time that war had been declared. Next day Daville received a letter from von Paulich in which he informed him that their two countries were at war and repeated everything they had agreed verbally with regard to their mutual conduct so long as the war lasted. At the end he assured Madame Daville of his unalterable respect and expressed his readiness to perform any service of a private nature.

Daville at once replied and repeated that he and his staff would observe their agreement since "all nationals of Western states, without exception, form one single family here in the East, whatever dissensions, in other respects, may exist between them in Europe." He added that Madame Daville thanked him for his remembrance and regretted that for a time she would lose the Colonel's company.

In this way, in the autumn of 1813, the two Consulates entered upon the war and upon the last year of the "Consular Era".

The steep paths in the great garden surrounding the French Consulate were full of yellow leaves which poured in dry, rustling streams over the planted terrace. On these steep paths, under the bent and harvested fruit-trees, it was as warm and peaceful as it can be only on days when a moment of tranquillity prevails over the whole of nature, that wonderful breathing-space between summer and autumn.

Here it was that Daville, hidden away, with the neighbouring hillside blocking the view before him, finished his great reckoning with himself and his emotions, plans and convictions. Here,

in the last days of October, he heard from Davna of the issue of the battle of Leipzig. Here he heard from a passing courier of the French defeat in Spain. He spent the whole day in the garden, until it began to grow too chilly and the cold rains turned the yellow, rustling leaves into a slippery mass of formless mud.

One Sunday morning—it was November 1, 1813—a cannon sounded from the Citadel of Travnik, shattering the dead, damp silence between the steep and bare hillsides. The townsmen raised their heads and counted the number of shots fired, while regarding each other with looks of mute inquiry. Twenty-one cannon were discharged. The white smoke dispersed above the Citadel and silence descended once again, to be broken afresh a little later.

In the middle of the bazaar the crier gave tongue, the goitred, short-breathed Hamza, who was losing his voice more and more, and his saucy, humorous wit. Still, he did his best to shout as well as he could and reinforced his lack of voice by his gestures. And so, puffing with the winter air, he announced that God had blessed the arms of Islam with a great and righteous victory over the rebellious infidels, that Belgrade had fallen into Turkish hands and that the last traces of the infidel revolt in Serbia had been for ever stamped out. The news spread swiftly from one end of the town to the other.

On the afternoon of that same day, Davna went into the town to see what impression this news had made on the population. The Begs and bazaar folk would not have been what they were—the aristocracy of Travnik—if they had exulted frankly and aloud over anything, even the victory of their arms. They merely mumbled, with restraint and dignity, some non-committal monosyllable without deeming it worth while to pronounce even this distinctly. As a matter of fact, even they were not altogether easy in their minds, since, however good a thing the pacification of Serbia might be, there was a corresponding disadvantage in that Ali Pasha would be returning as a victor and would presumably be even harsher and more tyrannical towards them than he had been hitherto. For the rest, in the course of their long lives they had heard a good many criers crying a good

many victories, but none of them ever remembered any New Year being any better than the Old. It was in this sense that Davna read them, although none of them deigned by so much as a look to reply to his unseemly curiosity.

He also went to Dolac to hear what the friars were saying. But Fra Ivo excused himself on the grounds of duty at the church, spun out the evening service to an unprecedented length and did not quit the altar until Davna had grown tired of waiting and had gone off to Travnik.

He sought out the monk Pakhomi at his house and found him lying like a log in a cold, bare room, fully clad and ghastly pale in the face. Davna offered him his services as doctor, without asking any questions about the day's news, but the monk refused to take medicine and declared that he was well and in need of nothing.

Next day Daville and von Paulich paid an official visit to the Deputy Vizier to offer congratulations on the victory. They managed, however, not to meet either at the Residency on arriving or leaving.

With the first snow Ali Pasha returned. At his entry into the town, cannon fired from the fort, trumpets sounded, children scampered, and the lips of the Begs of Travnik were unsealed. Most of them glorified the victory and the victor, in measured and dignified terms but pronounced aloud and in public. On the very first day Daville sent Davna to the Residency to express his good wishes and to present a gift from himself to the victorious Vizier.

Ten years before, while residing at Naples as *Chargé d'Affaires* on a mission to the Knights of St. John, Daville had bought a heavy, finely engraved, gold ring, without a jewel but with a delicately worked laurel wreath where a jewel would normally be set. Daville had bought it from the effects of a Knight of Malta who had left a good many debts and had no heir. According to report, this ring had once served as the victor's prize in the tourneys of the Knights of the Maltese Order. In these latter times, when things were going the way of irreparable defeat and he found himself drifting, in agonizing uncertainty about his country and his own and his family's future, Daville had given things away more readily and more frequently and had

found an unusual and hitherto unfamiliar satisfaction in bestowing on others objects he had loved and jealously guarded till now. In giving away these dear and precious objects which he had hitherto regarded as part and parcel of his personal life, he was unconsciously bribing the Fate who had now turned completely against him and his. At the same time, he felt a deep and sincere joy, exactly like the joy he had once felt when he had acquired these things for himself.

Davna was not admitted to the presence of the Vizier but handed over his present to the Secretary, explaining to him at the same time that for hundreds of years this precious object had been bestowed on him who had been first in the contest and that the Consul now sent it to the happy victor with his compliments and good wishes. Ali Pasha's Secretary was a certain Asim Effendi, called the Stammerer. He was pale and thin, a shadow of a man, with an impediment in his speech and eyes which did not match in colour. He had a perpetual look of being frightened to death and thus scared every visitor in advance into a terror of the Vizier.

Two days later the Consuls were received, first the Austrian, then the French. The times of French precedence were over. Ali Pasha was exhausted but satisfied. By the bright light of a snowy winter's day Daville noticed for the first time that the Vizier's pupils flickered from time to time, first down and then up. As soon as his eyes came to rest and his gaze steadied, this extraordinary flickering of the pupils began. The Vizier himself seemed to be conscious of this and to dislike it; he therefore moved his eyes and shifted his glance incessantly, which once again gave a disagreeable and suspicious look to his whole face.

Ali Pasha, who for this occasion had placed the ring on the middle finger of his right hand, expressed his thanks for the gift and for the congratulations. About the expedition to Serbia and his own success he said little and spoke with the false modesty of vain and sensitive natures, who keep silence because they consider that no words would be sufficient or adequate and that by saying nothing they astound the other party to the conversation, thus magnifying their success into something which is quite indescribable and barely conceivable by ordinary mortals. For years after the event successful men of this type crush everyone who talks to them about their success.

The conversation was laborious and insincere. Silences kept occurring in which Daville tried to find new and stronger expressions in which to congratulate Ali Pasha on his victory. The Vizier left him to his mental efforts and himself sent his eyes roving round the room with a look of anxious embarrassment on his face and the silent conviction that he would never hit on a properly dignified expression. As usually happens on such occasions, in his desire to show a still livelier sympathy and a still sincerer joy, Daville unintentionally hurt the feelings of the victorious Vizier.

"Is it known where the leader of the rebels, Karageorge, is now?" asked Daville, who made this enquiry precisely because he had heard that Karageorge had fled to Austria.

"Who knows or cares where the fellow is wandering?" replied the Vizier contemptuously.

"But is there not a risk that some country may give him hospitality and help and that he may afterwards return again to Serbia?"

The muscles at the corners of the Vizier's mouth tightened with rage, then relaxed in laughter.

"He won't return. Besides, there would be nowhere for him to return to. Serbia has been so laid waste that neither he nor anyone else will think of raising a rebellion there for many years."

Daville tried, still more unfortunately, to lead the conversation towards the position of France and the war plans of the Allies who at this time were already preparing to cross the Rhine.

On his way back to Travnik the Vizier had already received a special messenger whom von Paulich had sent to Busovača to meet him and who had transmitted to him, besides von Paulich's congratulations, a comprehensive written report on the situation in the European theatre of war. Von Paulich wrote to the Vizier "that God had at last smitten the intolerable pride of France and the united efforts of the nations of Europe had borne fruit". He had described in detail the Battle of Leipzig, Napoleon's defeat and withdrawal behind the Rhine, the unceasing advance of the Allies and the preparations which were being completed for the crossing of the Rhine and the consummation



of the victory. He gave exact figures of the French losses in killed, wounded and equipment, with all the armies of the vassal nations who had deserted Napoleon.

On his arrival in Travnik Ali Pasha had found still further reports which confirmed what von Paulich had written to him. It was on this account that he now talked in this manner with Daville, without a single mention of his sovereign's name or that of his country, as if he were speaking to a representative of some nameless, cloudy land which had no real shape and no fixed position in space, or as if he were carefully and superstitiously avoiding contact, even in thought, with those on whom Fate swooped and who had long, long ago passed into the ranks of the vanquished.

Daville cast one more glance at his ring on the Vizier's finger, then took his leave, with an expression of forced cheerfulness, which he succeeded better and better in assuming, the more serious and obscure his own position grew.

When they left the Residency, it was already dark in the covered courtyard, and when they rode out of the gate, Daville was dazzled by the whiteness of the soft, wet snow which was piling up on all the houses and filling the streets. It was about four in the afternoon. Blue shadows lay on the snow. As always during the shortest days, night had fallen early and drearily in this fold in the mountains and from under the deep snow there could still be heard as it were the whispering of waters. Everything exuded dampness. The wooden bridge resounded dully under the horses' hoofs.

As always on leaving the Residency, Daville felt a momentary relief. He forgot for an instant who was victor and who vanquished and thought only how once again he was riding peacefully and with dignity through the town. A shudder ran through him, partly from excitement, partly from the overheated atmosphere of the Divan and the dampness of evening in the air. He tried not to shiver. It reminded him of that February day when he had ridden for the first time through this same bazaar, to the curses and exhortations or the disdainful silence of the fanatical population, as he went to his first audience with Husrev Mehmed Pasha. And all at once it struck him that since

his earliest day he had never been doing anything else but ride along this same road, to the same accompaniment, with the same thoughts.

In these seven years he had accustomed himself, by degrees and of necessity to a great many painful and unpleasant things, but he had always set off for the Residency with the same feeling of fear and faintness. Even in times of the greatest good fortune and in the happiest circumstances he had always, as far as he could, avoided visiting the Residency and had relied on getting his business done through Davna; and when a case required a visit to the Vizier and really could not be dispatched without one, he had girded himself up as for some difficult exploit, he had slept badly and eaten poorly for a full twenty-four hours beforehand. He had rehearsed what he would say and how he would say it, he had forecast all the other party's replies and finesses and worn himself out in advance by doing so. In order to give himself some rest, peace and consolation, he had then said to himself, in bed at night:

"Well, this time tomorrow I shall be in this same place and those two bitter and disagreeable hours will be far behind me."

First thing in the morning the painful game began. Horses clattered and servants scurried about the courtyard in front of the Consulate. Then, in due course, Davna had come, with a dark, fiery face which would have taken the heart out of a heavenly angel, let alone a careworn, mortal man. This was the sign for the agony to begin.

By the crowding of children and loiterers it was felt throughout the town that one of the Consuls was going to the Residency. Then from the turning at the top of the market place, Daville's procession would appear, always the same. In front, the Vizier's outrider who had to escort the Consul to and fro on each occasion. Behind him, the Consul on his black horse, all calm and dignity; two paces behind him and a little to the left, Davna on his skittish Arab bay which the Travnik Moslems hated as much as they did Davna himself. And behind them, two Consular kavasses on good Bosnian horses and armed with pistols and knives.

This was how he had to ride through each time, holding himself erect on his horse, looking neither to right nor left,

neither too high nor yet between his horse's ears, neither absent-minded nor yet preoccupied, neither laughing nor gloomy but serious, attentive and calm, with rather the same slightly unnatural look with which generals in portraits look out over the battle into the distance, somewhere between the highway and the horizon, to the point from which at the decisive moment, some assured and well-calculated reinforcement is due to appear.

He himself could not tell how many hundreds of times in the course of years he had passed like this along the same road, but he knew that, at all seasons and under all Viziers, he had always found it as much of an affliction as if he were going to be tortured. It had happened to him to dream of this same road and to suffer agonies in his dream, as he rode with his ghostly escort through two ranks of menace and ambush, along the way to a Residency which he could never reach.

Even as he recalled all this, he was actually riding in this very way through the twilit bazaar full of snow. Most of the shops were already shut. Passers-by were few and they walked slowly and bowed, as if they were dragging some attachment through the deep, heavy snow, with their hands stuck in their belts and their ears tied up in kerchiefs.

When they got to the Consulate, Davna asked Daville to see him for a few minutes. He then gave him the news he had heard from the Vizier's entourage. A traveller from Constantinople had brought word of Ibrahim Halim Pasha. After two months' stay at Gallipoli, the former Vizier had been banished to a little town in Asia Minor, having previously been stripped of all his estates in and around Constantinople. His household had gradually split up, each man going in search of a livelihood and his own fortune. Almost alone, Ibrahim Pasha had taken the road of exile; and as he journeyed to the distant Anatolian township, where the countryside is bare, scorched and precipitous, a steep stone-pit with no grass and without a drop of running water, he kept on repeating his perpetual idea, how, withdrawn from the world and clad in a simple gardener's dress, he would till his gardens in solitude and silence.

A few days before his departure into exile, Tahir Beg, the Vizier's former Secretary, had died suddenly — of heart failure, it was said. It had been a heavy blow for Ibrahim Pasha, from

which only an old man's forgetfulness helped him to recover, as he dragged out his last days in that stony, waterless place.

Daville dismissed Davna and remained alone in the snowy twilight. The mist came up from the valley in great waves. The deep, soft snow smothered every sound. In the bottom below, Abdulla Pasha's sepulchre could be dimly seen under snow. The feeble light from the taper burning in the mausoleum over the grave shone in through the window.

The Consul shivered. He felt weak and feverish. The news and his own impressions came flooding over him, and as often happens when men are tired and over-anxious, Daville forgot for a moment everything he had heard and been through that day, all the difficulties and unpleasantnesses which were waiting for him tomorrow and in the future. He thought only of what he saw before him. He thought of the octagonal sepulchre of stone, by which he had walked for years, of the flame of the taper, which this evening hardly pierced the mist but which he and Desfossés had once called "the perpetual light", of the origin of this sepulchre, and of the history of Abdulla Pasha who rests in it.

The low stone sarcophagus covered with a green pall, on which was written "May the All-Highest lighten his tomb!", the thick taper in the tall wooden candlestick, burning day and night above the dark tomb, in an impotent effort to accomplish what the inscription prays for to God and God, it seems, is unwilling to accomplish. The Pasha who, while still young, had mounted high and had come by chance to his native land to die there. Yes, it all came back to him, as if it were every man's fate and his own. He remembered how, before he went away, Desfossés had nevertheless managed to see and read Abdulla Pasha's will, and how he had told the story of it, with animation and at length.

Knowing how little light there was in this valley, the Pasha had made over his houses and tenancies as a religious trust and had left a still further sum in cash, all in order that, for the duration of this world and age, this one great taper at least should burn above his grave, and he had settled it all while he was still alive, and made it secure, before the Cadi, in writing, in the presence of witnesses — the kind of wax, the size of the

luper and the pay of the man who would change and light it, so that no successor and no stranger would ever be able to deny or betray the trust. Yes, that Pasha had known how many dark evenings and foggy days there were in this narrow valley, where he had to lie till Judgement Day; he had known, too, how quickly people forget both the quick and the dead, how they shirk their obligations and break their promises. And while he lay sick in one of these wooden houses, with no prospect of recovery, with no hope that his eyes, which had seen so much of the world, would ever again behold a more spacious view than this, the only thing which could bring him some little consolation in his limitless grief for a spent life and a premature death was the thought of the clear beeswax which would burn above his grave with a calm, noiseless flame, with no smoke and no droppings. And so, everything he had won by great effort, by courage and intelligence, in his brief life, he gave for the little flame which burns over his helpless remains. In his restless life, as he had gazed his fill at men and countries, he had seen that fire is the basis of creation: it stirs up life and destroys it, visibly or invisibly, in innumerable forms and in different degrees. Therefore his last thoughts were devoted to fire. Naturally, this little speck of flame was not very secure, nor, probably, would it last until the end, but it represented all that one could do — shed some enduring light upon one point of the dark, cold earth — in other words, kindle all eyes which passed that way, if only with a single spark.

Yes, this was a strange bequest and these were strange people! But any man who had lived some years here and had spent his nights like this at the window could understand this easily and well.

He could hardly take his eyes from the feeble flame which sank deeper and deeper in the darkness and the damp vapours; but then there suddenly rose up again before him the memory of the day that was over, of his difficult conversation with the Vizier, of Ibrahim Pasha and Tahir Beg, once his Secretary, of whose death he had heard that evening. Livelier than when he had lived at Travnik, the Secretary stood before him. Doubled over his sash, his shining eyes squinting a little with their sharp glitter, the Secretary said to him, as once he had done on just such a cold evening as this:

"Yes, sir, everyone sees the victor in a glory, as the Persian poet says 'The face of the victor is like a rose'."

Yes, the face of the victor is like a rose, but the face of the vanquished is like a graveyard from which everyone flies and turns his head.

Daville uttered aloud the reply he had once failed to make to the Secretary when he lived. Then he remembered that he was talking to a dead man. He felt once again a cold shudder and a trembling throughout his body, and rang for them to bring in the candles.

After this Daville went often to the window to see the shining of the taper from Abdulla Pasha's sepulchre and the little, dim lights in the houses of Travnik; and he pondered further on the place of fire in the world, on the fate of the vanquished and victor. He recalled the living and the dead, until one by one all the windows were darkened, even those of the Austrian Consulate. (Victors go easily to bed and sleep well!) There was left only the melancholy taper shining from the tomb, and at the opposite end of the town, one other light different and larger than it. They were making brandy in some still-house, as they did every year at this time.

At the other end of the Travnik valley, full of dank snow, the first still had in fact been set up in Peter Fufić's still-house and they had begun to distil the brandy. The still was outside the town, down by the riverside, and below the road leading to Kalibunar.

The valley was filled with an icy draught and with wet snow. In the still-house by the water's edge the "witches' cauldron" sang and hissed all night long and the smoke poured back from the vent. The green wood whined under the still, round which there crowded grimy, frozen men, muffled, wrapped up in red shawls, battling with the smoke and the sparks, with the wind and the draught and with the pungent tobacco smoke which perpetually burnt their lips and stung their eyes, on top of it all.

Here was Tanasije, the famous expert on stills and brandy. Throughout the summer he had worked and yet not worked. But as soon as the first plum fell, he had gone from house to house, in every town in the province of Travnik, and even further. No one knew better how to soak the plums, how to tell

when the ferment had gone down, how to distil and pour off the brandy. He was a swarthy man, who had spent his life in cold and smoke-laden still-houses, always peaky and unshaven, sleepy and surly. Like all good masters of their trade, he was always dissatisfied with his own work and with those who were helping him. His whole conversation consisted of an angry muttering and all his orders were negative:

"Not like that . . . Don't let it leak in . . . Don't give it any more . . . Don't touch it any more . . . Stop, that's enough . . . Lay off . . . Stand back."

After these ill-tempered and obscure mutterings which both he and his aides understood perfectly, there would finally emerge from Tanasije's cracked and sooty hands, from the ooze, the smoke and the seeming disorder, a sound and perfect piece of work — a good, clear brandy, divided into "first running", "stingo", "mild" and "second running", a shining, fiery liquid, clear and wholesome, speckless and unclouded, without a trace of the toil and squalor from which it had come or any reminder of smoke or corruption, but smelling of plums and orchards and pouring into the casks as pure and precious as a spirit.

Up till this moment Tanasije fussed over it, as over some tender newborn babe; at the consummation he forgot his mutterings and his sharp words and merely moved his lips as if he were soundlessly whispering a spell. With unerring eye he watched the spirit of the brandy and by the spirit, without ever tasting it on his tongue, he diagnosed its strength, quality and origin.

Round the fire which burnt beneath the still there were always a number of visitors, people from the town, and among them there was invariably some vagrant or idler, some ballad-singer or story-teller, since it was pleasant to eat and drink and tell tales by the still, in spite of the smoke stinging one's eyes and the cold blast on one's back. For Tanasije these people did not exist. He worked, muttered, gave orders, always giving out what not to do, and in doing this he simply passed by those who were sitting round the fire, as if they were creatures of air. It seemed as if, to his way of thinking, these idle folk formed an integral part of the still. At all events, he neither called them by name nor drove them away nor noticed them.

For forty years Tanasije had distilled brandy in this way, up and down the towns, townlets and monasteries; and he was still the same, except that he had clearly grown lame and old. His mutterings were quieter than they once were and often merged into a cough or a senile snarling. His thick, bushy eyebrows had grown grey and, like the rest of his face, they were smeared with the grime and clay with which the still is daubed. And under these tangled brows two eyes can be dimly descried like two glassy sparks which at times shine out more strongly and at times go into complete eclipse.

This evening there is more company found the fire. The master of the house, Peter Fufić himself, with two other Serbs from Travnik, merchants, a ballad-singer and Marko of Djimrije, a holy man and a foreteller of the future, who is perpetually on his rounds all over Bosnia and sometimes comes back to Travnik but when he does goes no further than this still-house and never goes into the town or the bazaar. This Marko is a neat, grizzled peasant from eastern Bosnia, small and lively, whose whole appearance has something trim and tidy about it. He is well-known as a soothsayer and a prophet. At home, in his own village, he has grown sons and married daughters, land and a house; but ever since he became a widower, he began to devote himself to prayer, to admonish the world and to foretell the future. He is not greedy for money, he will not make his forecasts on every occasion nor to every man. He is severe and ruthless to sinners. The Moslems know him and allow him to make his prophecies.

When Marko comes to a place, he does not go to wealthy houses but settles in some still or peasant house, by the fire. He talks to the men and women who gather there. Then, at some point, he goes out into the night and stays there for an hour, sometimes for two. When he returns, wet with dew or rain, he sits down by the fire, where his audience is still waiting for him, and gazing at a little board of larch-wood, he begins to speak: rebukes him sternly for his sin and asks him to leave the gathering. He does this, in particular, with women. He looks long and keenly at some woman and then says calmly but decisively:



"Daughter, your arms are on fire to the elbow. Go and put them out and leave off sinning. You know what sin you labour under."

The woman vanishes, ashamed, and Marko then begins to make general prophecies for the whole assembly.

This evening, too, Marko went out, although there was a bitter wind outside and icy sleet. Now, he looked at his little board and tapping it lightly with the first finger of his left hand, he gazed at it for a long while and slowly began.

"In this town there is a fire smouldering: it is smouldering in many places. It cannot be seen, because people carry it about inside themselves, but one day it will break out and seize upon both the guilty and the innocent. On that day, the righteous man will not remain in the town, but outside it. Far outside it. And let each pray to God that it may be he."

Then all at once he turned slowly and attentively to Peter Fufić.

"Master Peter, you too have some sorrow in your house. It is great and it will grow but it will turn to good. But on that account look to the church and do not forget the poor. Let not your taper go out before the ikon of St. Dimitri."

While the old man spoke, Master Peter, who was ordinarily a proud and arrogant man, bowed his head and lowered his eyes to his sash of Tripoli silk. Silence and embarrassment reigned, but once again Marko looked at his little board and began to tap thoughtfully on it with his nail. Imperceptibly, his firm, gentle voice began to detach itself from this dry sound, first in a few unintelligible words, then more and more clearly.

"Eh, wretched Christians, wretched Christians!"

It was one of those general prophecies which Marko uttered occasionally and which were afterwards spread from mouth to mouth among the Serbs.

"They are trampled in blood. Ankle-deep in blood, and still it mounts. Blood, today, and for a hundred years, and here's the half of another hundred. So much I see. Six generations add their blood, hand over fist, one after another. All Christian blood. The time will come when every child will be able to read a book and will know its letters; men will talk to each other from world's end to world's end and will hear every

word but they will not be understood. Some men will wax strong and will get such wealth as was never remembered before, but their riches shall fail them in blood and neither swiftness nor cunning shall help them. Others shall be so poor and hungry, that they shall eat their own tongues for hunger and call upon death to end them, but death will be deaf and slow. And whatever the earth brings forth, all food shall smack of blood. The Cross shall of itself be darkened. Then a man shall come, naked and barefoot, without staff or scrip, and he shall dazzle all eyes with his wisdom, his strength and his beauty and shall save men from blood and violence and shall comfort every soul. And the Third of the Trinity shall reign."

At the end of this speech the old men's words sank lower and grew harder and harder to hear, until they vanished completely in an indistinguishable murmur and in the quiet, measured knocking of his nail on the dry, thin board of larch-wood.

They all looked at the fire, under the spell of these words: they had not understood them but the indefinite purport of them had impressed them and filled them with the vague excitement with which simple folk always receive a prophecy.

Tanasije got up to look at the still. Then one of the merchants asked Marko whether a Russian Consul would be coming to Travnik. A silence ensued in which everyone felt that the question was out of place at that moment. The old man answered sharply and angrily:

"Neither he nor another will come but even those who have been here up till now will soon go away and soon the years will come when the main highway will turn aside from this town. You will long to see travellers and merchants, but they will go off elsewhere and you will sell to one another and buy from one another. One and the same money shall go from hand to hand but nowhere will it grow warm or bring in profit."

The merchants looked at each other. An uneasy silence reigned, but only for a minute, since it was broken immediately by a quarrel between Tanasije and the servant lads. The merchants also started a conversation, and the old man took on once more his usual modest and genial expression. He opened his worn leather wallet and began taking out of it maize bread and heads of garlic. The servants had put on the coals some

gobbets of beef which sizzled and spread a strong savour around. They did not offer any to the old man, since it was well known that he never ate in any man's house but lived only on the stale food from his little leather wallet. He ate slowly and with relish, then went over to the other side where the smoke and the smell of roast meat could not reach him. There he went to sleep, coiled up as quiet as a schoolboy, with his hand beneath his right cheek.

The brandy livened up the conversation between the merchants: even so they kept glancing towards the corner where the old man was sleeping, and then they lowered their voices. His presence filled them with disquiet and with a certain solemn seriousness which sat well on them.

Tanasije continued stoking the fire with beech logs, as sleepy and surly as ever, as patient and inexorable as Nature herself, with never a thought that from the other side of Travnik a French Consul was gazing at the red glow of his fire, and never dreaming, in his simplicity, that there were Consuls and other men alive in the world who could not get to sleep.

## 27

The first months of 1814, his last months in Travnik, were spent by Daville in complete isolation, "ready for anything", without any instructions and without any news from Paris or Constantinople. He paid the kavasses and servants from his own resources. Confusion reigned among the French authorities in Dalmatia. There were no more French travellers or couriers. The news from Austrian sources which reached Travnik slowly and unreliably, was more and more unfavourable. Daville stopped going to the Residency since the Vizier received him with decreasing attention and with a certain absent-minded and offensive kindness, which was more painful than any rudeness or insult. Besides, the Vizier was growing harsher and more intolerable to the whole country every day. His Albanian detachments lived in Bosnia as if it were a conquered land and they took from Moslems and Christians alike. Among the Moslem population discontent began to gather head, not the overt

discontent which howls itself out and passes off in unimportant riots in the towns, but the stifled, covert discontent which smoulders a long while but when it does break out, leads to bloodshed and massacre. The Vizier was intoxicated with his victory in Serbia. Actually, according to the stories of experts and eye-witnesses, this victory had, on the contrary, shown itself to be inconclusive and Ali Pasha's part in it to have been inconsiderable, but in Ali Pasha's own eyes that only made it the greater and more important; in his own estimation he grew greater as a victor with every day that passed. Every day, too, his ruthless attacks on the Begs and the most prominent Moslems increased; but by this very policy the Vizier weakened his own position. Individual acts of terror can be perpetrated and profitable changes effected by violent means, but it is impossible to rule permanently by violence. Terror soon loses its cutting edge as an instrument of government. Everyone knows this except those who are forced by circumstances or by their own impulses to carry out a terrorist policy. The Vizier knew no other way. He never noticed that fear had already passed away from the Begs and Ayans and that his attacks, which at the start had indeed created panic, now frightened no one, just as they had less and less power to hearten himself. Earlier on, they had trembled with fear, but now they were faint and cold, while he himself, on the other hand, now trembled with rage at every least sign of insubordination and resistance, and even at their silence. The fortress commanders were in communication with each other, the Begs were whispering to each other and in all the towns the bazaars were ominously quiet. With the warmer days an open movement might be expected against Ali Pasha. That was what Davna confidently foresaw.

The Brothers avoided the French Consulate although they continued to receive Madame Daville amiably on Sundays and feast-days when she went out to Mass at the church at Dolac.

The kavasses questioned Davna as to the length of time they might count on remaining in French service. Rafo Atijas looked for another post as interpreter or agent, since there was no question of his going back to his uncle's store. By steady underground activity on the part of the Austrian Consulate, news reached the population, down to the last man, of the Allied

victories and Bonaparte's end, which was now only a question of days. The idea grew more and more firmly fixed that the French era was over and the days of the French Consulate at Travnik were numbered.

Von Paulich himself never appeared anywhere and said nothing to anyone. Daville had not seen him for six months, ever since Austria had entered the war, but he felt his presence every minute. He thought of him with a special emotion which was neither fear nor envy but had something in it of both. He seemed to see him in the big building on the other side of the Lašva, quietly dispatching his business, cold, completely self-possessed, always in the right, never in doubt or confusion, upright but crafty, straightforward but inhuman. The complete opposite of the stupid, perverted victor at the Residency, he was in fact the only victor in the game which had been played out for years in this Travnik valley. He was only waiting, calmly and pitilessly, for the victim they had driven into a corner to fall and, in falling, to proclaim the victory won.

That moment had come; and von Paulich behaved like a man taking part in some ancient and solemn game, the rules of which are inflexible and painful, but logical and fair and honourable alike to winners and losers.

One day in April, the Austrian kavass came to the French Consulate for the first time in seven months, bringing a letter for the Consul. Daville recognized the writing, all composed of clean, straight strokes, like flights of steel arrows which were all of equal sharpness and all went in one direction. He recognized the fine hand and guessed the purpose of the letter but was left in astonishment at its contents.

Von Paulich announced that the had just received news that the war between the Allies and France was happily concluded. Napoleon had abdicated. The lawful sovereign had been called to the throne of France. The Senate had promulgated a new constitution and a new government had been formed, with Talleyrand, Prince of Benevento, at its head. Supposing that this news regarding the fate of his country would be of interest to him, von Paulich had sent it to Daville, happy that the ending of the war once again made it possible for them to establish

personal relations. He begged Daville to transmit to Madame Daville the assurance of his unalterable respect, and so forth, and so forth.

The Consul's surprise was so great that the true import and full significance of what he had heard did not fully penetrate his mind. His first reaction was to drop the letter and rise from the table as if he had received some announcement he had long expected from von Paulich. For a long while, and especially since December of last year and the defeat in Russia, Daville had pondered the possibility of a conclusion of this kind; he had turned it over in his mind and divined his own attitude towards it. In this way he had gradually and imperceptibly reconciled himself to the fall of the Empire and to the possibility of that fall. And so with every day and every event that old and distant threat came nearer; insensibly it filtered into reality and by degrees came to supplant it. Beyond the Emperor and the Empire life could be dimly seen, eternal, all-powerful, incomprehensible, life with its limitless possibilities.

He did not know himself when he had begun to grow used to thinking of the events and affairs of this world without Napoleon as their basic presupposition. At first it had been hard and painful, a kind of inner loss of consciousness. He had staggered mentally like a man who feels the earth quaking and shifting under his feet. Then he had merely felt within himself a great void, an absence of all emotion and all resistance, simply a parched and poverty-stricken existence, without any prospect or any of those distant apparitions which may be unreal but which give us strength and a real dignity on our way through life. Finally, he thought so much of the matter and gave himself over so often to this sensation that he came more and more to assess the world and France and his own and his family's fortunes from this point of view.

During all this time and right up to the present Daville had conscientiously carried out his duties. He had read the circulars and the articles in the "*Moniteur*"; he had listened to the accounts given by couriers and travellers of Napoleon's plans for the defence of metropolitan France or the prospects of his reaching a settlement with the Allies. But immediately afterwards he had gone back to his own thoughts of what it would be like

when there was no Emperor and no Empire and he dwelt on them longer and longer. In short, there took place in him the same drama that was being played out at that time in the hearts of thousands of Frenchmen, worn out in the service of a regime which in reality had long been doomed by the very fact that it had been forced to demand of people more than they were able to give. And when a man grows reconciled and familiar with an idea in his mind, sooner or later he begins to find grounds for it in reality. This is all the easier in that reality has moved in the same direction as his thoughts and has often anticipated them.

Recently Daville had been able to note with surprise that he had already covered an immense part of the way in this direction. Forgetting the many long internal struggles he had had with himself in the course of the last twelve months, it seemed to him as if he had reached easily and at a bound the spot where he now found himself. In any case, he had long felt like a man who is "prepared for anything", which in fact meant that he had already detached himself from the regime now foundering in France and that he was willing to come to terms with what should succeed it, be it what it might.

Yet now, in the instant when all this rose up before him as reality, Daville staggered as if he had been struck unexpectedly and with overpowering force. He walked up and down the room and the significance of what he had read in von Paulich's letter grew within him and stirred up wave upon wave of mixed feelings: astonishment, terror, sorrow, and yet a certain satisfaction that he and all his family had been spared and were alive among such collapses and danger, and then again feelings of uncertainty and fear. From somewhere there came into his recollection the Old Testament saying that God is mighty in all His works and these words came back to him incessantly like a tune which cannot be got out of the head, although it would have been impossible to say either what these "works" were or in what their greatness lay or what it all had to do with the Lord in the Bible.

For a long while he paced the cold room in this way but he could not bring himself to rest on any one thought: still less could he review and concentrate on what he had heard. He felt

The arrival of a courier from Constantinople tore him from his indecision. The courier was bearing the congratulations of the Ambassador and his staff to the new government and the expression of their devotion to the lawful sovereign, Louis XVIII, and the House of Bourbon. He also brought orders to Daville to inform the Vizier and the local authorities of the changes in France and to make known to the Vizier that as from that day he was in Travnik as the representative of Louis XVIII, King of France and Navarre.

As if he were working to a long premeditated plan or to some inaudible directive, Daville wrote what was necessary to Paris that same day, without delay or hesitation.

"I learn from the Austrian Consul here of the happy reversal of fortune, which has restored the descendant of Henri le Grand to the throne of France and to France herself peace and every prospect of a better future. So long as I live, I shall regret not having been in Paris on this occasion, to add my own voice to the plaudits of the people's enthusiasm."

Such was the opening of Daville's letter, in which he placed his services at the disposal of the new government, begging to "lay at the feet of the Throne the expression of his loyalty and devotion" and adding modestly that he was "an ordinary citizen, one of the twelve thousand Parisians who had signed the famous petition in defence of the Martyr King, Louis XVI and the Royal House". He concluded this letter with the hope that "a Golden Age will succeed the Age of Iron." At the same time he sent his congratulations to Talleyrand in verse, as he had often done on previous occasions, while Talleyrand had been in office. The complimentary verses began:

Des peuples et des rois heureux modérateur,  
Talleyrand, tu deviens notre libérateur.\*

And since, on the courier's account, he had no time to complete them, he styled these two sheets of inferior verse "a fragment".

At the same time Daville proposed that the Consulate at Travnik should be closed, since in the completely changed situation there was no need for it to function further. He asked

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\* Talleyrand, blest controller of peoples and kings, you now become our liberator.



that he might leave Travnik with his family in the course of that month, leaving Davna, whose loyalty was proved and had been demonstrated many times, to administer the Consulate and complete the closure. Having regard to the exceptional circumstances, unless he received contrary instructions by the end of the month, he would move with his family to Paris.

Daville spent the whole night writing these compliments, petitions and letters. He slept no more than a couple of hours but rose fresh and invigorated and dispatched the courier.

From the terrace, where the still unopened tulips were bent beneath a plentiful dew, Daville looked after the courier and his escort as they went down the steep road to the highway in the valley. Their horses were wading over the knees in a thick ground-mist, flushed by invisible sun, in which drowning deeper and deeper, they disappeared from view. Then he turned back into his room on the ground floor. Here there were traces everywhere of the past night, spent in work and in writing — the tilted candles, burnt low, strewn papers, broken sealing-wax. Without touching anything, Daville sat down among the drafts and the torn paper. He felt a heavy fatigue but also a great relief that it was all finished and sent off to the proper quarter, decisively and irrevocably, and there could be no more doubts or deliberations about it. He sat at the table and leant his drowsy head on his clasped hands.

And yet, it was hard not to think, not to remember, not to see. Twenty-five years had gone by him in the search for a "middle way" which would bring reconciliation and give the individual that dignity without which he cannot live. Twenty-five years had gone in seeking and finding, losing and regaining, passing from one enthusiasm to another, and now, weary, torn and exhausted, he had arrived at the point from which he had started when he was eighteen. That meant that all roads led onward only in appearance: in reality, they led in a circle, like the deceptive mazes in Eastern tales; and so they had led him, tired and faint-hearted, to this spot, among the torn papers and the overwritten drafts, to the point from which the circle began again, as it did from every other point on its circumference. That meant that that middle way, the true way, did not exist, leading onward to permanence, peace and dignity; all paths

turned in a circle, always along the same deceiving track. The only things that changed were the men and the generations who travelled the road, always in error. That meant, the weary, misguided thought in this tired man's brain concluded, that meant that, in general, there was no road and that this new direction, in which his lame protector, the mighty Prince of Benevento, was now to lead him, halting, was only a part of that circle which is utter roadlessness. One just travels on. The point and dignity of the journey lay only in what we found there within ourselves and the extent to which we found it. There was no road and no journey's end. One just travelled on, travelled and wore and tired oneself out.

Yes, so now there he was, journeying without halt or rest. His head fell, his eyes closed of themselves, and a red mist rose before them, and as it were horses wading through it, stepping delicately, all sinking deeper and deeper into the mist and vanishing in it, with their riders. Then new ones and new ones, innumerable horses and riders vanishing and drowning in illimitable mist, where one dropped with exhaustion and longed for sleep.

Letting his head fall on his crossed hands, overcome with weariness and inextricable thoughts, Daville fell asleep on his writing table, among the papers and the burnt-out candles of the night before. Only let him sleep, not raise his head, not open his eyes, above all not in this damp, red mist, among the waves and ever thickening crowds of horsemen. But they would not let him be. One of the riders, behind him, constantly and mercilessly laid a cold hand on his neck and spoke incomprehensible words to him. He drooped his head lower and lower but more and more they persisted in rousing him.

When he lifted his head and opened his eyes, he saw the laughing, reproachful face of his wife. Madame Daville was scolding him for overtiring himself and telling him to undress, lie down and rest. Now, when he was broad awake, the idea seemed to him intolerable that he should remain alone with his thoughts, in bed. He began to arrange the papers on the table and as he did so to talk to his wife. Up till now he had always avoided telling his wife clearly and in full what changes had taken place in the world and in France and what these meant to them. Now it seemed all at once to be an easy, simple matter.

On hearing so clearly and definitely that the whole foundation of things had changed, and with it their own situation, and that their stay in Travnik was in truth coming to an end, Madame Daville had been, for a moment, upset and bewildered. But it was only for a moment, until she took in completely what this meant to her family and what practical tasks it entailed for her personally. As soon as she had grasped this, she calmed down, and they began at once to discuss the route, the removal and their eventual residence in France.

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Madame Daville set to work. Just as she had once arranged and furnished this same house for them to live in, she now made everything ready for the move, calmly, carefully and tirelessly, without complaining and without asking anyone's advice. Slowly and deliberately there began the dismantling of the household she had created in the course of these seven years. Everything was marked, well packed and got ready for the road. The terrace with its flowers and the big garden with its vegetable beds were a painful spot for Madame Daville.

The white hyacinths which Frau von Mitterer had once christened "Wedding Joy" or "Emperor's Bride" were as sturdy and full-flowered as ever, but the middle of the terrace was occupied by the Dutch tulips which Madame Daville had managed to procure in large quantities and a variety of colours during recent years. Last year they had still been sickly and ragged; this year they had succeeded well and bloomed properly, evenly and in full flower, so that they looked like rows of schoolchildren in procession.

In the garden the German sweet peas were already out. Madame Daville had got the seed for them from von Paulich the year before, a few weeks before the declaration of war. The deaf-mute Mundjar was digging about them now. He was at work now, as he had been every spring. He knew nothing of what was going on in the world or of the change in these people's fortunes. To him this year was like any other. For ever bent

double, he crumbled the soil with his hand, clod by clod; he manured, transplanted, watered, smiled at Jean-Paul or little Eugénie, when the little girl was brought out on to the terrace. With the quick, delicate movements of his earthy fingers, with a dumb man's mouthings and grimaces, he explained to Madame Daville that in von Paulich's garden this same sweet pea was growing higher and flowering more abundantly but that that was of no significance, since its real class could not be judged by that. That would be seen when the pods began to form.

Madame Daville looked at him. She confirmed by signs that she had understood everything and went off into the house to get on with the packing. Even here she remembered that she would soon have to leave it all, house and garden, and neither she nor her family would see the ripe pods of that sweet pea; and tears came into her eyes.

And so at the French Consulate they quietly made ready to leave. There was, however, one question which presented itself to Daville, the question of money. He had already sent off to France such savings as they had. No pay had arrived for months now. The Sarajevo Jews who had worked with Freycinet and had often made loans to the Consulate as well were now mistrustful. Davna had money saved, but he was remaining here at Travnik in an ill-defined capacity and in a state of complete uncertainty; it would not be right to deprive him of what he had and ask him to lend it to the State, and without security at that.

Both interpreters, Davna and Rafo Atijas, were well aware of the situation in which Daville found himself, and while he struggled and debated in this fashion which way he should turn, old Salomon Atijas came one day, Rafo's uncle, the most prominent of the Atijas brothers and the head of the whole prolific tribe of the Travnik Atijases.

Short, very stout and bandy-legged, in a greasy kaftan, with a head that had no neck but was set directly on narrow shoulders, he had the large, projecting eyes of those who suffer from heart. He was all in a perspiration and out of breath from the heat of the May day and the unaccustomed walk up the hill. Fearfully he shut the door behind him and collapsed panting into a chair. A scent of garlic and undressed skins came from

him. His swarthy, hairy fists rested on his knees and on every hair twinkled a tiny bead of sweat.

They exchanged greetings several times, coming back and back to the same meaningless phrases of courtesy. Daville did not wish to admit that he was leaving Travnik with his family and the heavy, panting Master Salomon was quite unable to say why he had come. Eventually, however, in that hoarse, throaty voice which Daville remembered from Spain, the Jew began to declare how well he understood the unexpected changes and the large requirements of States and State officials, that times were hard for everyone, including even a business man who was concerned only with his own affairs and finally — well, finally — if official funds did not reach Monsieur le Consul in time, whereas a journey was a journey and the needs of the service cannot wait, well, here was he, Salomon Atijas, always at the service of the French Imperial — that is to say Royal — Consulate and Monsieur le Consul personally, and at his disposal with what little he possessed or could do.

Daville, who had thought at first that Atijas had come to obtain or request something from him, was surprised and touched. His voice faltered with emotion. The muscles of his face, between his lips and his chin, where his ruddy skin was beginning to wither and sag and grow tired, quivered visibly. There followed an embarrassed offer and an embarrassed returning of thanks. Finally, it was agreed that Atijas would lend the Consulate, on a bill of exchange, twenty-five Imperial ducats.

Salomon's large, prominent eyes were moist, which gave them an unaccustomed shine, especially in comparison with their bilious and bloodshot whites. In Daville's eyes, too, there shone the tears of the emotion which had never left him during these last days. They talked now more freely and more at their ease.

Daville sought the choicest words to express his gratitude. He spoke of his sympathy and understanding towards the Jews, of humanity and the need for people to comprehend and help each other, without distinction. He confined himself to general and indefinite phrases, since he could no longer speak of Napoleon, whose name had a great power of attraction for the Jews.

Still less dare he clearly and openly mention his new Government and his new sovereign by name. Salomon gazed at him with his great eyes and continued to sweat and to breathe heavily, as if to him too all this was plain and distressing, as distressing as it was to Daville and more so, as if he understood and grasped completely what a torment and a danger all these Emperors and Kings, Viziers and Ministers were, whose goings and comings did not depend in the least degree on us, yet nevertheless exalted or annihilated us, us and our families and all we are and possess; as if, in general, he were unhappy at having had to leave his dark warehouse and his piles of skins and climb up to this lofty, sunny place and sit with gentry on unaccustomed chairs in luxurious rooms.

Delighted that the question of money for the journey had been solved with such unlooked for ease and in order to give the conversation a slightly more cheerful tone, Daville said, half jokingly:

"I am most grateful to you and I shall never forget that you came in spite of all your other cares and that you gave a thought to the lot of the representative of France. To tell you the truth, I am amazed that, after all that has gone on here, after all the fines you have paid, you are in a position to lend anybody anything. The Vizier flattered himself that he had emptied your coffers to the bottom."

At the mention of the persecution and of the fines which the Jews had had inflicted on them by Ali Pasha, Salomon's eyes took on a fixed and worried expression of animal melancholy.

"That cost us a great deal and took a great deal from us, and truly it did drain our money-chests to the bottom, but I can tell you, and you ought to know..."

Here Salomon looked down in embarrassment at the sweaty hands upon his knees and after a short silence, went on in a different, more subdued tone of voice, quite changed, as if, suddenly, he were talking from some quite different angle.

"Yes, it frightened us and cost us a lot. Yes, indeed. And truly the Vizier is harsh, a harsh and hard master. But he has only to deal once with us Jews and we have outlasted scores and scores of Viziers. Viziers change and go — it's true that each takes something away with him. Viziers go, they forget what

"Ah, that's good, that's good," Daville nodded his agreement, laughing as before and encouraging Salomon to go on. But it was that very laugh which caused the Jew to stop short and to look the Consul a little more closely in the eye, once again with his earlier, worried and fearful expression. He was afraid that he might have gone too far and said what he should not. And he himself saw that what he had said was not what he had meant to say. He did not know himself what that ought to have been; only something had driven him to speak, to utter his complaint, to commend and explain himself, like a man who is given a unique opportunity, a few precious minutes only, for an important and urgent commission. As soon as he had left his store, and climbed the hillside where ordinarily he never went, and had come into this brightly lit room, to a comeliness

"No, I won't say that he's not. Yes, yes, these gentlemen are smart and skilful. Only, you know how it is; these gentlemen are smart enough; they are powerful men, our masters, strong as dragons, but they make war, they fight, they spend. You know our saying, great lords are like a great wind, they blow, they stop, they die away. We stay quiet and work, we keep close; and that's why we last longer and are always there."

voice as if he wished to make him speak lower, too.

Salomon interrupted him at once in his quieter tone of uncommonly sly and skilful.

"Ah, that's good. I like that. And the Vizier thought himself

Daville laughed heartily.

Here Salomon looked straight at Daville, no longer with eyes of melancholy and humorous alarm but with a new expression that was direct and bold.

they did and how they carried on; new Viziers come and each starts all over again. But we remain, we remember, we keep note of all we have been through, and of how we defended and preserved ourselves, and we hand down from father to son these experiences we have paid for so dearly. Well, and so our money-chests always have two bottoms. The hand of the Vizier reaches down to one and empties everything away but underneath it there is always something left for us and our children, to save us all alive and to help our own folk and our friends in need."

Here Salomon looked straight at Daville, no longer with eyes of melancholy and humorous alarm but with a new expres-

and cleanliness to which he was not used, it had seemed to him an important and precious thing to be able to talk to this stranger who would be leaving this town in a few days; to talk to him as he would never again, perhaps, have the chance or the courage to talk to anyone.

Forgetting his first shyness and his acute discomfort, he felt more and more strongly the need to say something further to this stranger about himself and his people, something urgent and secret, from this great hole of a Travnik, from the damp storehouse where one lived so hard, in dishonour and injustice, without beauty or order, without judge or witnesses. It would be a message addressed he himself knew not to what quarter, but to some better, more orderly, more enlightened world beyond, to which the Consul was returning. For once let him say something that was not merely cunning and prudence, which had nothing to do with getting and saving, with everyday accounting and valuing, but on the contrary, with giving and spending, with a painful, magnanimous pride and with sincerity.

But the very desire which suddenly came upon him, to impart and deliver something further, some great and general message concerning his own situation and life and the sufferings of all the Atijases in Travnik from the beginning, hampered him in finding the right manner and the needful words to express, briefly and worthily, what was now choking him and driving the blood into his head. So he spoke falteringly, not what was filling him to the brim and what he so longed to utter — how they struggled and how they managed to preserve a secret strength and dignity — but only the broken phrases which came to his tongue.

"You see — that is how we keep going and how we live and we don't mind . . . for our friends, for the right, for the kindness which is shown us. Because we . . . because we too . . ."

Here his eyes suddenly grew moist and his voice broke. He got up in confusion. Daville rose too, touched by some indefinite emotion and a feeling of friendship, and held out his hand. Salomon seized it warmly with an awkward, unpractised movement and stammered a few words more in which he begged Daville not to forget them and to say wherever he could yonder and in the proper quarter that they were living here in distress



once and left Davna in charge of the Consulate. The question of the closing of the Consulate-General at Travnik would be decided during his stay in Paris.

Daville sought an audience with the Vizier to inform him of his departure.

Ali Pasha now wore the look of a sick man. He was unusually amiable to Daville. It was clear that he had been informed of the imminent closure of the Consulate. Daville presented the Vizier with a sporting gun and the Vizier presented him with a fur-lined cloak, which signified that he considered Daville to be leaving for ever. They took leave like two men who have not much to say to each other, since both are too taken up and overloaded with their own worries.

That same day Daville sent von Paulich a gun as a present; a valuable carbine of German make, and a few bottles of Martinique. In a letter of some length he informed him that he would shortly be leaving Travnik with his family and going "on extended leave of absence, which, if God grants, will be permanent." Daville requested to be given visas and recommendations to the Austrian frontier authorities and to the garrison commander at Kostajnica.

"My wish is," Daville wrote further, "that the agreements now being concluded at Paris may bring the world a peace as lasting and as wise as that of Westphalia, and may solidly ensure a long respite for the present generation. I hope and desire that from now on our great European family, united and reconciled, will cease to offer the world a sorry example of cleavage and discord. You know that these were my principles before and during the late war and that they remain so, more than ever, today."

"Wherever I may be," wrote Daville, "and wherever Fortune may cast me, I shall never forget that in the barbarous country in which I was condemned to live, I found the most civilized and the most amiable man in Europe".

As he finished the letter in this style, he decided to set off without saying goodbye to von Paulich personally and by word of mouth. He felt that of all the unpleasantnesses he had to bear the most unpleasant would be to endure the serene victorious countenance of the Lieutenant-Colonel.

In reporting to the Court Chancellery the forthcoming closure of the French Consulate-General at Travnik, von Paulich at once proposed the closing of the Austrian Consulate-General as well. That Consulate became unnecessary, not only because there would be no further French activity in these parts, but also because, judging from all the indications, internal convulsions must be expected in Bosnia and open conflict between the Vizier and the Begs. Everyone's energies and attention would be devoted to this conflict and in consequence no attempts of any kind need be expected against the Austrian frontiers for a considerable time. Vienna could always be kept well informed of Bosnian internal affairs through the Brothers or through special agents.

With this proposal of his von Paulich sent also a copy of Daville's letter. At the end, where Daville had spoken favourably of him himself, he added in his own hand: "I have had occasion, several times before, to draw attention to Monsieur Daville's luxuriant imagination and his tendency to exaggerate."

Daville spent a whole summer afternoon with Davna, putting papers in order and giving him instructions. Davna was as saturnine as ever; the tense muscles stood out on his temples. It had been decided that his son should be assigned to work in the Embassy at Constantinople. Daville promised Davna to see to the conclusion of this affair at the Ministry, since as a result of the great changes in France it had stuck fast. Thinking only of his son, the handsome, intelligent youth of twenty-two, Davna had promised to complete the winding-up in proper form and to remove everything, down to the last pen and the least scrap of paper, even if they hacked him to pieces.

As they had not managed to finish their work, they went on with it after supper. About ten Davna went off.

Left to himself, Daville looked round the half-empty room, in which a single candle was burning and which was now overwhelmed by the dark. The windows were curtainless. On the white walls lighter patches stood out, where until yesterday pictures had hung. Through the open window came the sound of water. From both the Turkish clock-towers, the hour was struck, first from the one near by, then from the one further off down in the Lower Market, as if it were mocking the first.

The Consul was tired out, but his excitement kept him awake and alert with a sort of strength and he continued putting his personal papers in order. There, in the cardboard folder tied with green tapes, was the manuscript of his epic on Alexander the Great. Of the twenty-four projected cantos seventeen had been written, but even they were not complete. Earlier on, in writing of Alexander's campaigns, he had had "The General" continually before his eyes, but now, for more than a year, ever since he had experienced the fall of a living conqueror as part of his own personal destiny, he had no longer had the heart to say a word about the rise and fall of the long dead conqueror of his epic. So now this unfinished work stood before him as a logical and chronological anomaly: Napoleon had traversed the great arc of his rise and fall and had once more come to earth, while Alexander was still somewhere in mid-flight, conquering the "Syrian defiles" at Issus, without any thought of falling. Daville had often struggled to get on with the thing, but each time he had seen clearly that his poem invariably fell mute in the near presence of real events.

Here too was the beginning of a tragedy about Selim III, which he had started writing last year, on the departure of Ibrahim Pasha, remembering his long colloquies with the Vizier about the unhappy, enlightened Sultan.

Here were all those complimentary verses and rhymed epistles, inspired by various solemn occasions and in praise of various persons and régimes — poor verses, devoted to lost causes or to personalities who today meant less than the dead.

Finally came bundles of accounts and personal letters, tied up with string, yellowed and dog-eared. When the string broke, these papers crumpled like ruins. There were some of them dating from twenty years back. At the very first glance Daville recognised individual letters. He saw the firm, regular hand of one of his best friends, Jean Villeneuve, who had died suddenly last year, on board ship off Naples. The letter dated from 1808, and had been written in reply to some worried epistle from Daville.

"... Believe me, my dear fellow, your anxieties and black thoughts are quite unjustified — more so to-day than they ever were. The great and exceptional man, who now controls the

destiny of the world, is laying the foundations of a better and a lasting order for remotest ages. Therefore we can rely entirely upon him. In him lies the best guarantee of a happy future, not only for each of us but also for our children and children's children. So be at peace, my dear friend, as I am at peace; and my peace of mind rests on the clear realisation I have mentioned . . . ”

Daville looked up from the letter and gazed at the open window, through which moths had flown in, attracted by the light in the room. Then, from the quarter nearby, singing was heard, faint at first, but growing steadily louder. It was Musa the Singer coming home. His voice was hoarse and feeble and his singing spasmodic, but drink had not yet completely ruined it; there was still life in it and what von Mitterer had once called *Urjammer*. Now Musa had turned the corner of his block, for his voice came fainter and fainter, with longer and longer pauses like the cries of one who is stifling and drowning. It rose again to the surface, to utter one more cry, then sank again deeper than before.

Now the Singer had staggered into his yard. His voice could no longer be heard. Silence reigned once again, a silence which the rustling of water in the night did not ruffle but made still more unbroken and complete.

That was how everything drowned. It was like that that “The General” had drowned and so many powerful men and great movements before him.

Left once more in the unbroken silence of the night, Daville sat for a moment, as if transfixed, with his hands folded and his eyes far away. He was perturbed and anxious but not frightened or lonely. In spite of all the uncertainty and all the difficulties which lay before him, it seemed to him as if, for the first time since he was at Travnik, things were clearing a little and revealing a short stretch of the road before him.

Since that February day, more than seven years ago, when he had come in agitation and humiliation from his first audience with Husrev Mehmed Pasha to the room on Baruch's ground-floor and collapsed on the hard settle, all his work and all his efforts in connexion with Bosnia and the Turks had dragged

him to earth, bound him, enfeebled him. Year by year, the workings of the "Eastern poison" had increased in him and laid him waste, that poison which darkens the eyes and corrodes the will and with which this land had begun to ply him from the very first day. Neither the proximity of the French army in Dalmatia nor all the lustre of great victories had been able to change this. And now, when, after collapse and defeat, he was making ready to abandon it all and set off into uncertainty, a determination and will such as he had not known during those seven years were appearing within him. His anxieties and needs were greater than ever before but, miraculously, they were not unmaning him as they had done hitherto but whetting his mind and broadening his view; they were not falling upon him from an ambush, as a curse and a misfortune, but rolling along with the rest of life.

There could be heard now from the next room a sort of rustling and scratching, like a mouse in the wall. It was his wife, unwearied and selfpossessed as ever, preparing and tying up the last packages. In this same house his children were asleep and growing. They too would grow up one day (he would do everything he could to see that they grew up good and happy) and they would set off to look for the road he had never succeeded in finding; and even if they never found it, they would certainly look for it with greater energy and dignity than he had been able to do. Now, they were asleep and growing. Yes, there was life and movement in this house, as in the world outside, where prospects were opening up and new possibilities were coming to fruition. — As if he had left Travnik long ago, he thought no more of Bosnia nor of what it had given him and how much it had taken away from him. He only felt flowing back into him strength and patience and the resolve to rescue himself and his family. He went on arranging the discoloured papers, tearing up what was out of date and superfluous and sparing and collecting what might be needed in his future life in France, in altered circumstances.

In this automatic task he was accompanied by a vague but continual notion like an obstinately recurring tune: still, there must somewhere be that "right road" which he had sought all his life in vain. It must exist and some time or other someone

is bound to discover it and open it to all men. He himself could not tell how, when or where, but it would be found in his childrens' time, or in that of his childrens' children or in generations further still. Like an unheard and inward melody, that thought lightened his labour.

## EPILOGUE

For three weeks now the weather had been set fair. The notables had begun to go out for their talks on the Sofa at Lutva's café, as they did every year. But their talks were restrained and gloomy. All over the country that wordless pact was being concluded in favour of rebellion and resistance to the witless and intolerable government of Ali Pasha. The matter was already decided in men's minds and was now growing to a head of its own accord. Ali Pasha himself was hastening this ripening process by his own proceedings.

Today is the last Friday of May, 1814. All the Begs are present in force and the conversation is brisk and serious. All have heard the news of the defeats of Napoleon's armies and his abdication; all they are doing now is to exchange, compare and complete their information. One of the Begs, who spoke yesterday with some men from the Residency, says that everything is fixed for the departure of the French Consul and his family and it is known, confidentially, that the Austrian Consul will move soon after him, having settled in Travnik solely on the Frenchman's account. And so one may freely reckon that by the autumn there will be no Consuls or Consulates in Travnik and no trace of all they brought in and introduced.

They all receive this news as if it were the tidings of a great victory; for although in the course of years they had in many respects become used to the presence of foreign Consuls, they are all pleased, nevertheless, that there will be no more of these

foreigners with their alien and outlandish ways of life and their impudent interference in Bosnian affairs and occasions. They discuss the question who shall take over the "Dubrovnik Depot" where the French Consulate is now and what is to become of the big Hafizadić house when the Austrian Consul also leaves Travnik. They all talk a little louder, so that Hamdi Beg Teskeredjić, who is sitting in his place, may be able to hear what it is all about. He has grown very old and bent, fallen in upon himself like a ruined building. His hearing is going. He cannot raise his eyelids, which droop still more than before, but has to throw back his head when he wants to take a good look at someone. His lips are blue and stick to each other when he speaks. The old man lifts his head and asks the one who spoke last:

"When did they come here, these . . . Consuls?"

There follows an exchange of looks and guesses. Some answer that it was six years ago, others that it was still longer. After a brief explanation and reckoning it is agreed and established that the first Consul arrived more than seven years ago, three days before Bairam.

"Seven years," says Hamdi Beg, thoughtfully and weighing his words, "seven years! And do you remember what a stir and an outcry there was over these Consuls and this . . . this . . . Bonaparte? Bonaparte here, Bonaparte there. He's going to do this, he won't do that. The world is too small for him. There's no limit nor equal to his strength. And these Christians of ours were lifting their heads like barren corn. Some hung on to the coat-tail of the French Consul, others to the Austrian, a third lot are waiting for a Russian. The *rayah* fairly lost their wits and ran mad. Well, that was that and it's over. The Kings have risen and smashed Bonaparte. The Consuls will be leaving Travnik. People will talk of them a year or two longer. The children will play at Consuls and Kavasses on the river bank, riding on wooden sticks; then they too will forget as if there had never been any such things, and everything will be just as, by God's will, it has always been."

Hamdi Beg ceased, as his breath gave out, and the rest were silent, waiting for whatever else the old man might have to say; and as they smoked, they enjoyed the good, the conquering silence.



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